

G.W.F. Hegel

Critical Assessments

Edited by
Robert Stern

Volume II

**Late Nineteenth – and Twentieth – Century Readings: From
British Hegelianism to the Frankfurt School**

Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers



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Leading Philosophers**

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Introduction

Robert Stern

Faced with one of the periodic revivals of interest in Hegel that are such a feature of twentieth-century Western philosophy, Richard Bernstein posed the question 'why Hegel now?'¹ This could have been asked on numerous occasions over the past hundred years, with reference to several distinct national philosophical traditions; and Hegel's *Rezeptionsgeschichte* shows that it can be answered in different ways each time that interest in his thought has been revived. The picture of Hegel that emerges with every re-encounter is therefore somewhat different, speaking to different concerns, and so causing his thought to be seen in a new light. It is for this reason that a range of readings have been brought together in this volume that illustrate distinct stages in Hegel's twentieth-century interpretation, showing the variety of ways in which his work has been taken up, and criticized anew.

The first such episode to have made an impact on the understanding of Hegel's thought took place in Britain and America.² Writing in 1882, William James (like Bernstein almost a century later) had cause to marvel at the growing influence of Hegel within Anglo-American philosophy:

We are just now witnessing a singular phenomenon in British and American philosophy. Hegelism, so entirely defunct on its native soil that I believe but a single young disciple of the school is to be counted among the privat-docents and younger professors of Germany, and whose older champions are all passing off the stage, has found among us so zealous and able a set of propagandists that to-day it may really be reckoned one of the most potent influences of the time in the higher walks of thought.³

To James, it seemed quite remarkable that at a time when Hegel's metaphysics had been repudiated on the Continent, Hegel's idealism was

having a great impact in Britain and America, for all the world as if the Left Hegelian critique had never occurred. Like many observers, James accounts for this turn to Hegel by interpreting it as a reaction against empiricism,⁴ based on the growing need for a rationalist, transcendent metaphysics, as 'a sword wherewith to smite the three-headed monster of anarchy in politics, traditionalism in religion and naturalism in science'.⁵ Thus, it has been claimed, 'in Germany, Hegelianism had completely failed to arrest the progress of materialism; the fact remains that it was introduced into Great Britain to fulfil that very purpose',⁶ so that here (and for a similar reason, in America) it was thanks to his idealism that Hegel's philosophical influence came to be restored.

However, it should not be assumed that the impact of Hegel in Britain and America at the turn of the century represented a wholesale return to objective idealism, whatever may have been the motivations of his earliest followers in these countries.⁷ On the contrary, it is remarkable that while being received into an intellectual climate increasingly hostile to materialism, positivism and empiricism, Hegel's idealism was quickly subject to criticism, on grounds very similar to those put forward in the middle of the nineteenth century by Feuerbach, Marx and Kierkegaard. In fact, therefore, the reading of Hegel in Britain and America was shaped by many of the same critical issues as had preoccupied his earlier interpreters on the Continent.

However, rather than being influenced by the (to us) more celebrated critics of Hegel's idealism (such as Feuerbach and Marx), in Britain and America the origins of these concerns can be traced back to Schelling and Trendelenburg, and also to another source, the German philosopher Rudolph Hermann Lotze. Although Lotze is now a largely forgotten figure, he exerted a considerable influence in the late nineteenth century, and was widely perceived as an important opponent of Hegelian idealism.⁸ In fact, he echoed many of the same judgments that have been discussed in the context of Hegel's nineteenth-century reception:⁹ that Hegel is a panlogist, who prioritizes reflection over perception, and treats thought as the essence of things. In adopting this position, Lotze became an important independent source of opposition to Hegel's apparent identification of thought and being, as one orthodox Hegelian critic of Lotze observed:

But Hegelianism put its whole trust in thought . . . Lotze never loses sight of this error of Idealism, and he was so possessed with the conviction of its viciousness that he regarded it as the cardinal defect of the great philosophers of Greece. It is scarcely too much to say that the main endeavour of his life was to refute it. There is no form of the distinction between knowledge and reality which he neglects to emphasize. He sets Logic and Metaphysics so apart that it is more

difficult to relate them to each other at all than to identify them. He is never weary of repeating that thoughts are not things, although they may be valid of things; and his world of ideas or of knowledge stands apart from, though it is in some way connected with, the world of things.¹⁰

Thus, though he may no longer be remembered, Lotze echoes the objections to Hegel's panlogism that can be found in the work of his more important critics, and was responsible for introducing these objections into the Anglo-American context.

Influenced by Lotze, as well as Schelling and Trendelenburg,¹¹ therefore, misgivings quickly surfaced regarding Hegel's idealism. In Britain, one of the first to voice these misgivings was Andrew Seth,¹² with the publication in 1887 of the second series of Balfour Philosophical Lectures under the title *Hegelianism and Personality*. Although in his earlier work Seth had identified himself as an enthusiastic Hegelian, in this book he introduced a strongly critical note into his discussion. Significantly, his central objection was to Hegel's idealistic ontology, which he condemned in familiar terms: Hegel wrongly begins by treating the Idea as ontologically primary, and so tries 'to construct the world out of abstract thought or mere universals', whereas in fact 'thought cannot make [the real]; thought only describes what it finds'.¹³ Seth therefore agrees with Schelling¹⁴ that Hegel fails to bring off the transition from Logic to nature, which Seth interprets in creationist terms, arguing that 'Hegel's whole account of nature is that it is a reflection or realization of the abstract categories of the Logic. If the reality of natural things consists only in this, then creative agency must be attributed, more or less explicitly, to the thought-determinations'.¹⁵ Echoing the Left Hegelian critique, Seth insists that this deduction of existence from essence cannot be achieved, and that 'real things are not the shadows of intellectual conceptions, but intellectual conceptions are themselves the shadows of a real world'.¹⁶

It has been observed that 'no subsequent Hegel commentator of the period could ignore the doubts to which Seth had first given voice'.¹⁷ The main and most important effect of *Hegelianism and Personality* was that in responding to Seth, Hegel's defenders began to deny that he should be interpreted as a panlogist, so that the nineteenth-century image of Hegel's idealism started to be challenged for the first time. Thus, writing in response to Seth in 1890, D. G. Ritchie argued that while Hegel 'was influenced . . . by the Neoplatonic idea of Emanation', it is wrong to interpret him in this light; in fact, we should 'read Hegel backwards', taking nature and mind as given, rather than attempting to deduce them both from the Idea. Taken in this way, Ritchie suggests, Hegel will no longer be misinterpreted as a speculative cosmologist, but 'we [will] find that his logic and the whole of his philosophy consist in this perpetual

“criticism of the categories”, i.e. in an analysis of the terms and concepts which ordinary thinking and the various special sciences use as current coin without testing their real value’.¹⁸

Likewise, also in response to Seth, John Ellis McTaggart argued in 1892 that one of the ‘great objects which Absolute Idealism claims to have accomplished’ is ‘the classification, according to their necessary relations and intrinsic value, of the various categories which we use in ordinary and finite thought’.¹⁹ On this reading of Hegel as a category theorist, McTaggart concedes that he is unable to answer Schelling’s question ‘why does anything exist at all? why is there not rather nothing?’; but, McTaggart insists, this was never the goal of Hegel’s philosophical thought:

The dialectic system is not so wonderful or mystic as it has been represented to be. It makes no attempt to deduce existence from essence; it does not even attempt to eliminate the element of immediacy in experience, and to produce a self-sufficient and self-mediating thought. It cannot even, if the view I have taken is right, claim that its course is a perfect mirror of the nature of reality. But although the results which it attains are comparatively commonplace, they go as far as we can for any practical purpose desire. For, if we accept the system, we learn from it that in the universe is realized the whole of reason, and nothing but reason. Contingency, in that sense in which it is baffling and oppressive to our minds, has disappeared. For it would be possible, according to this theory, to prove that the only contingent thing about the universe was its existence as a whole, and this is not contingent in the ordinary sense of the word. Hegel’s philosophy is thus capable of satisfying the needs, theoretical and practical, to satisfy which philosophy originally arose, nor is there any reason to suppose that he ever wished it to do more.²⁰

Thus, in response to Seth’s ‘Lotzian and Neo-Lotzian’²¹ critique, there emerged in Britain a new way of reading Hegel, which placed less emphasis on his alleged panlogism. Instead of the Logic being treated as an attempt to deduce the real from the ideal, the first part of Hegel’s system was seen in a fresh light, as providing an analysis of our categories in which their adequacy is tested;²² this was to become an increasingly influential way of approaching the Logic among Hegel’s sympathizers.

It is also significant that Seth, like Hegel’s earlier critics, gave his attack on Hegelian idealism an ethical and political dimension. Seth argued that by hypostatizing universality, Hegel gives priority to the species over and above the individual, by reducing the particularity of each person to what they have in common, as a result of which their identity and independence are undermined:

The doctrine of the universal Self is reached by a process of reasoning which I have already compared to the procedure of Scholastic Realism in dealing with individuals and 'universals'. Realism also treated the individual as merely the vehicle of a universal form. It took the species as a real existence apart from its individuals; more real than they, and prior to them, for they are regarded as in effect its creatures. The individual man stands in this secondary and dependent relation to the species 'humanitas', and that universal inheres in turn in a higher genus, till we reach the ultimate abstraction of a universal Being or substance of which all existing things are accidents . . . As against this view we may set Cousin's rendering of Abelard's doctrine – 'Only individuals exist, and in the individual nothing but the individual.' Similarity of essence or nature is one thing, existence is another. When existence is in question, it is the individual, not the universal, that is real; and the real individual is not a composite of species and accidents, but is individual to the inmost fibre of his being.²³

Out of this criticism, a school of so-called 'Personal Idealism' emerged,²⁴ which (like Hegel's earlier critics on the Continent) stressed the ethical and political dangers of setting essence prior to existence, and raised doubts about the place of the individual within Hegelianism. In raising this question, therefore, Seth began a debate that introduced very similar concerns to those that Schelling, Kierkegaard and Haym had emphasized half a century earlier, to which his sympathizers in Britain were forced to respond. Thus, while the person continued to be talked about as a unity of individuality and universality, this was increasingly understood in purely ethical terms, not as implying that the individual is 'the specification or particularization of that which is common',²⁵ but merely as indicating that the person is capable of combining their individual interests with a more universal point of view;²⁶ in this way, as a result of Seth's critique, the interpretation of Hegel's political philosophy in Britain took on a rather less metaphysical tone.

Turning now to America, the pattern of Hegel's *Rezeptionsgeschichte* is remarkably similar: once again, after a period of unchallenged ascendancy, Hegel's idealism quickly met with opposition, on grounds that echoed the misgivings of his earlier critics. Here, the decisive figure was William James, who fired his first 'skirmisher's shot' against 'Hegelism' in 1882, and continued the war throughout his life, albeit in a more conciliatory vein. The central target of James' attack was Hegel's 'vicious intellectualism',²⁷ to which he opposed his own pragmatism and radical empiricism. Under the influence of Bergson, but also of Lotze,²⁸ James argued that the concrete world of time and space has a different structure from the world of thought, and that the particularity of things can never be adequately conceptualized. He criticized intellectualism for the fact

that it 'substitutes a pallid outline for the real world's richness',²⁹ and (like Kierkegaard) claimed that it sought to transcend becoming and temporality by abandoning the human point of view. In voicing these misgivings about Hegel's essentialism, James was developing a familiar line of criticism, but in a way that was new in the American reception of Hegel's work.

The effect of this critique can be seen in the writings of James' Harvard colleague and contemporary Josiah Royce,³⁰ who was Hegel's most sympathetic and sophisticated American interpreter in this period.³¹ In his posthumously published lectures on 'Aspects of post-Kantian idealism', delivered in 1906, Royce broke new ground by laying greater stress on the *Phenomenology of Spirit* than on the *Logic*. By adopting this approach, Royce hoped to show that Hegel's real intention was to portray a 'logic of passion',³² of the conflicts of the will, and not a system of abstract thought; in this way, Royce suggested, Hegel's work is quite compatible with the spirit of pragmatism:

It is easy to say that in Hegel's treatment of his ethico-logical parallelism, as one might call it, he becomes a formalist, and often appears to falsify history by interpreting its catastrophes and its warfare in terms of the categories of his system. But this offence, in so far as it can be charged against Hegel, is much less present in the *Phaenomenologie* than in his much later lectures on the philosophy of history . . . On the contrary, the *Phaenomenologie* unites logic and history rather by means of a reducing of the thinking process to pragmatic terms than by means of a false translation of real life into the abstract categories of logic. It becomes manifest throughout the work that, for Hegel, thought is inseparable from will, that logic exists only as the logic of life, and the truth, although in a sense that we shall hereafter consider absolute, exists only in the form of a significant life process, in which the interests and purposes both of humanity and of the Absolute express themselves. The deduction of the categories of the thinking process, in so far as it is suggested in this work, is dialectical. It is based upon the method of antithesis, a method possessing for Hegel pragmatic significance and illustrating the way in which men live as well as the way in which men must think.³³

Thus, in response to James' criticisms, Royce underlined the voluntaristic aspect of Hegel's outlook by drawing attention to the *Phenomenology*, and thereby began an influential reappraisal of the latter.

Not all the American pragmatists shared James' hostility to Hegel, however; indeed, both C. S. Peirce and John Dewey singled him out for praise.³⁴ Of the two, Peirce's relation to Hegel is the more complex and interesting. Peirce's early works coincided with the beginnings of Ameri-

can Hegelianism, but he was quick to distance himself from this movement, and entered into a sharp public exchange with W. T. Harris, one of its leading members and editor of the Hegelian journal, *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*.³⁵ None the less, while he always remained critical, Peirce acknowledged the affinities that existed between Hegel's outlook and his own, admitting in his *Lectures on Pragmatism* of 1903 that 'my own doctrine might very well be taken for a variety of Hegelianism'.³⁶ The greatest convergence comes in Peirce's phenomenological deduction of the categories of Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness, and his demonstration that our immediate perceptual judgments (Firstness) and our relational judgments (Secondness) require mediation by reference to generalities (Thirdness); as Peirce admits, this deduction echoes Hegel's opening arguments in the *Phenomenology*.³⁷ None the less, what Peirce objects to is that Hegel then appears to reduce Firstness and Secondness to Thirdness, instead of recognizing that all three categories must be present in any coherent conception of the world.³⁸

Taken as a whole, therefore, it is clear that the Anglo-American response to Hegel at the turn of the century added a new level of understanding to the interpretation of his thought. Although the effect of the nineteenth-century critique of idealism was somewhat muted in Britain and America, it did have an influence, so that here there is the beginning of a critical reassessment of the Hegelian position. However, this reassessment did not get very far, partly because many of the leading thinkers of this period remained sympathetic to idealism, while finding in it inspiration for their attempts at social reform,³⁹ and partly because they were succeeded by a younger generation who viewed Hegel in a wholly negative light, and who rejected German idealism altogether.⁴⁰ Thus, whereas on the Continent a growing impetus for the reappraisal and reappropriation of his work was emerging, in Britain and America Hegel was more or less abandoned, so that after roughly three decades of intense interest, the desire to assimilate his thought was suddenly lost.

However, while Hegel's influence was waning in Britain and America around 1910, in Italy the interpretation of his work was going through its most crucial phase. Hegelian thought had been introduced into Italy very early, and, as in Germany, a division between orthodox and 'Left' Hegelians quickly emerged.⁴¹ Of the latter, the most important figures were Bertrando Spaventa and Francesco De Sanctis, who both sought to develop Hegel's ideas in a more humanistic, less metaphysical direction and to challenge his rationalistic idealism, in a way that paralleled the criticisms of Feuerbach and Marx.⁴² However, while Spaventa and De Sanctis belong to the nineteenth century, their significance lies in the way their critical Hegelianism was taken up and developed by the next generation of Italian thinkers, notably Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile.⁴³

Writing in 1945, Croce explained his ambivalence to Hegel by 'quoting Catallus when in love with Lesbia – I could live neither with him nor without him'.⁴⁴ Just this ambivalence is expressed in the title of his best-known work on Hegel, which was originally published in 1907: *What is Living and What is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel*. In this influential study, Croce attempted to save what he took to be the real insights of Hegelianism by cutting away the 'dead wood' and tracing back the roots of Hegel's errors. Thus, the book begins with a discussion of what is still 'living' in Hegel, which is the dialectical method of thinking. This consists in seeing certain concepts as abstract and contradictory except in relation to their 'other' in a higher synthesis: when this method is used, 'there disappears a series of dualisms, which are not true opposites, not even true distincts. They are false opposites and false distincts, terms which cannot be thought either as elements constitutive of the concept as universal, or as its particular forms, for the single reason that, as formulated, they do not exist'.⁴⁵ Croce denies that in trying to think through these oppositions Hegel is guilty of rationalistic optimism; he argues that although Hegel stresses the rationality of the real – its coherence, unity and order – he still recognizes how much that is apparently bad, ugly and false must be accommodated before this can be acknowledged, so that his vision also contains irreducible elements of the tragic.⁴⁶

None the less, although Croce is dismissive of some of the usual objections to Hegel, he argues that Hegel is guilty of important errors, which arise from Hegel's 'abuse' of the dialectic. According to Croce, Hegel's fundamental abuse is to treat the synthesis of *distincts* along the same lines as the synthesis of *opposites*, whereas in each case (Croce argues) the dialectical relations are different: in the case of opposites (such as 'true' and 'false', or 'life' and 'death', or 'being' and 'not-being') each one of the pairs is an abstraction from a more concrete unity, but in the case of distincts (such as 'true' and 'beautiful', or 'truth' and 'goodness') both are connected, but both are equally real and concrete, and therefore cannot be *aufgehoben* in some third term. Croce insists that failing to see that 'the one dialectic has a different process from that of the other',⁴⁷ Hegel makes the mistake of trying to synthesize distincts, with disastrous results. Croce emphasizes two in particular: first, it leads Hegel to deny the autonomy of art, as both art and religion are *aufgehoben* in philosophy, and so cannot be treated as equally valid forms of spirit,⁴⁸ and second, it leads him into panlogism and speculative *Naturphilosophie*, as he tries to synthesize nature and spirit via the Idea.⁴⁹ In this way, Croce argues, Hegel's critics are right to suspect that he attempted to overcome the 'force of contrariety'⁵⁰ in a premature synthesis, and that he seeks to eliminate all differences within his totalizing system, which ends up by viewing things in insufficiently differentiated terms.⁵¹

Like Croce, Gentile also wanted to save Hegel from himself, and saw

in his work a combination of genuine insight and distorting error. According to Gentile, Hegel was caught between the traditional static logic of the ancients and a new logic of activity, between the 'dialectic of what is thought of' and 'the dialectic of thinking':⁵² this is why he can be challenged by those (like Trendelenburg) who accuse him of being unable to accommodate change, activity and *praxis*. Under the influence of Spaventa, Gentile argues that the basis for the latter lies not in the content of thought, but in the activity of thinking, and that when this is added to the dialectic, the problem of becoming will be resolved. Gentile therefore offers a post-Kantian reading of the dialectic which stresses the free spontaneity of thought, and denies that the categories of Hegel's *Logic* have to be treated as static eternal forms.

It is evident, therefore, that while they began to uncover a less rationalistic, Platonic and panlogistic side to Hegel's thought, Croce and Gentile still saw his system in the shadow cast by his nineteenth-century critics, and therefore believed that ultimately it was necessary to 'reform' or break with Hegelianism, if anything of value was to be rescued from his philosophy as a whole. Beginning in the 1930s, however, a new and more positive image of Hegel started to emerge elsewhere as, for the first time, Hegel began to be understood not in *opposition* to the humanistic, non-metaphysical, anti-essentialist perspective of his critics, but as a crucial *precursor* and *source* of this very perspective. In identifying proto-Marxist and proto-existentialist themes in his work in this manner, Hegel's *Rezeptionsgeschichte* took a new turn, albeit one that is partially foreshadowed by some of the earlier Left Hegelian readings.

As is well known, this new, revisionary, reading of Hegel emerged predominantly in France, where his thought exerted relatively little influence until the 1930s.⁵³ The beginnings of Hegel's rise to real prominence can be traced back to Jean Wahl's book *The Unhappy Consciousness in the Philosophy of Hegel*, which was published in 1929. In this work, Wahl attempted to uncover a side to Hegel's thought that was darker, more romantic, less rationalistic than had previously been noticed, and to cast a fresh light on the whole direction of his philosophy. He was helped towards this reinterpretation by the publication of Hegel's early writings by Wilhelm Dilthey and Herman Nohl,⁵⁴ which revealed to Wahl that Hegel's real preoccupations and concerns were close to those of a Christian existentialist like Kierkegaard,⁵⁵ a fact that had been obscured by the speculative approach of the later Encyclopaedic system.⁵⁶ Wahl was therefore led to look at the *Phenomenology of Spirit* anew, treating it not merely as a prolegomenon to the mature system, but as the highest expression of Hegel's troubled vision; at the centre of his reading of the *Phenomenology*, Wahl placed Hegel's treatment of the Unhappy Consciousness, in which, (he argued) the sense of loss is epitomized. Thus, although Wahl himself was not prepared to call Hegel an

existentialist,⁵⁷ his influential study of the *Phenomenology* showed how existentialist themes could be uncovered in Hegel's thought.

In the wake of Wahl's study, the Hegel renaissance in France was taken further and given greater impetus by the work of Alexandre Kojève and Jean Hyppolite. Kojève gave an important series of seminars on the *Phenomenology* from 1933 to 1939 at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, which was attended by many who were to become leading luminaries of French intellectual life, as well as influential interpreters of Hegel in their own right, including Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Eric Weil, Georges Bataille and Jacques Lacan.⁵⁸ The text of these seminars was published in 1947, and it remains one of the most challenging readings of Hegel's thought. Equally important were the efforts of Hyppolite, who published the first volume of his magisterial translation of the *Phenomenology* in 1939 and the second in 1941, and in 1946 completed his commentary on the text, entitled *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's 'Phenomenology of Spirit'*, making this period around the Second World War the high-point of interest in Hegel in France.

While Wahl had read Hegel in the light of Kierkegaard's Christian existentialism, and made the Unhappy Consciousness the centre of his interpretation, Kojève read him in the light of Marx and Heidegger, and made the master-slave dialectic the key to his treatment, into which he wove both Heideggerian and Marxist themes.⁵⁹ Kojève cites as an epigraph to his lecture on the *Phenomenology* Marx's comment that 'Hegel . . . sees *labour* as the *essence*, the self-confirming essence, of man'⁶⁰ and, like Marx, identifies the work of the slave as an essential moment in self-objectification. At the same time, with Heidegger he emphasizes the slave's experience of death, and his recognition of finitude, out of which the slave also feels liberation from the natural world. Kojève therefore interprets Hegel's move to idealism in this light: it is an attempt to show how the human mind can overcome the material world of nature, by creating its own world through the power of speech, language and thought, an ideological realm in which we feel at home and free: 'Endowed with an "absolute power", which becomes in him an effective "force" [which is] "worthy of awe", Man produces, in [or through] "activity", or a "labour" [which is] rational or penetrated by the "Understanding", a real World contrary-to-nature, created by his "separated freedom" for his *own* "empirical existence" – the technical or cultural, social or historical World.'⁶¹ This free creativity also has a more tragic aspect, however, as it is limited and defined by an awareness of finitude and death; at the same time the capacity to die represents our liberation from the control of any transcendent creative power, such as God, and is thus the dialectical expression of our highest freedom.⁶²

Perhaps Kojève's best-known and most remarkable contribution to the interpretation of Hegel arises directly from the conjunction of Marxist

and existentialist aspects in his account: for, drawing on both Heidegger and Marx, Kojève argues that for Hegel history began with the sense of otherness, and can end in the universal satisfaction of the desire for recognition, which will put a stop to our urge to negate and overcome all externality:

For being born from the desire for recognition, history will necessarily stop at the moment at which this desire will be fully satisfied. Now this desire will be satisfied when each will be recognized in his reality and in his human dignity by *all* others, these others being recognized by each in their reality and dignity (a reality and dignity which are recognized as being) equal to his own. In other words, history will stop when man will be perfectly satisfied by the fact of being a recognized citizen of a *universal and homogeneous state*, or, if you prefer, of a classless society comprising the whole of humanity.⁶³

Thus, Kojève arrives at a non-metaphysical, secularized conception of Hegel's philosophical history, and reads the end of his system in anthropological, not theological, terms; he therefore takes another step away from the nineteenth-century image of Hegelianism, and offers a new vision of this notoriously problematic aspect of Hegel's work.

For readers of Hegel, however, Kojève's interpretation raises almost as many problems as it solves, and many have felt (with Jean Wahl) that 'it is quite false but very interesting'.⁶⁴ Hyppolite's approach is rather more judicious, while he too is influenced in his reading by existentialism and Marx. Like Wahl, he holds that 'unhappy consciousness is the fundamental theme of the *Phenomenology* . . . The unhappy consciousness is either a naïve consciousness which is not yet aware of its misfortune or a consciousness that has overcome its duality and discovered a unity beyond separation. For this reason we find the theme of unhappy consciousness present in various forms throughout the *Phenomenology*'.⁶⁵ Also like Wahl, Hyppolite argues that 'we find [Hegel] in his early works and in the *Phenomenology*, a philosopher much closer to Kierkegaard than might seem credible':⁶⁶ although Hegel admittedly ends in Absolute Knowledge, which seems to transcend all diremptions, the journey of consciousness is nevertheless characterized as 'the way of despair'.⁶⁷ At the same time, Hyppolite emphasizes the way in which Hegel foreshadows Marx's account of alienation,⁶⁸ and agrees with Kojève that recognition is capable of overcoming the tension between self and other. None the less, in his later writings on Hegel (such as *Logique et existence* and 'On the *Logic* of Hegel'),⁶⁹ Hyppolite gave greater weight to the *Logic* than hitherto; for, he argues, the claim to Absolute Knowledge and the transition to the *Logic* must be made if 'the phantom of the thing-in-itself' is to be avoided,⁷⁰ and with it the sense that we are out of touch with

being. Hyppolite acknowledges, however, that there is a tension between this return to the Logic and metaphysics, and the more humanistic, anthropological method of the *Phenomenology*, a tension which he sees as fundamental to Hegel's thought.⁷¹

It is partly thanks to this reading of Hegel by Kojève and Hyppolite that Marxism and existentialism became so interlinked in the intellectual life of post-war France;⁷² and it is clear that they helped bring about a rapprochement between Hegel and Marx in this period by treating existentialism as a kind of common ground on which Hegelianism and Marxism could be reconciled. While some remained hostile to this development,⁷³ existentialism also served to bring about the same kind of reconciliation outside France, as the themes of alienation, reification and estrangement from nature were discovered in both their works. Within the Marxist tradition, this approach was given great emphasis by the Hungarian Georg Lukács, who argued that the 'question of alienation' as raised by both the early Marx and twentieth-century existentialism 'has its theoretical and methodological roots in the Hegelian dialectic'.⁷⁴ In his study *The Young Hegel*, written in 1938, Lukács credits the early Marx with recognizing '“externalization” as the central philosophical concept of the *Phenomenology*'⁷⁵ while arguing that Marx's materialist theory is better able to explain and overcome it, by treating the problem as social and historical, not metaphysical. Lukács also talks of Hegel as a forerunner of Marx's philosophical anthropology, claiming that 'fundamental to [Hegel] . . . was the principle of human labour as the key to the self-creation of man';⁷⁶ once again, however, he suggests that this insight is vitiated by Hegel's idealist outlook, which to Lukács served to obscure much that is of value in Hegel's approach.

After Lukács, Hegel continued to have an impact within Marxist thought, largely because of the influence of the Frankfurt school.⁷⁷ Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse all dealt seriously with Hegel, while in the next generation this concern has been taken further by Jürgen Habermas, Michael Theunissen and others. Each has approached Hegel in a different way, but in general they turned to him as well as Marx in order to find some explanation for the process by which Western culture had become 'rationalized' (in Weber's sense). In his *Phenomenology*, Hegel himself had shown how the very forces designed to bring liberation and human self-realization, if developed one-sidedly, can lead to alienation and subjugation.⁷⁸ Likewise, the thinkers of the Frankfurt school have argued that the apparently progressive forces of modernity (science, liberalism, rationalized bureaucracy), in their distorted evolution under capitalism, have had the same disastrous results: far from leading to greater human emancipation, they have just produced more insidious forms of enslavement.⁷⁹ Although, like the original Left Hegelians, Adorno, Marcuse and Habermas accuse Hegel of being insuf-

ficiently radical in his approach – of being part symptom as well as part cure – this further development of Marxist thought has a clear debt to Hegel.

Thus, from the readings of Hegel's thought contained in this volume, it is possible to trace the many different ways in which his ideas have been taken up in the twentieth century. Thanks to these appropriations, Hegel's philosophy has retained its vitality. So often treated as a 'dead dog', Hegel has none the less been decisive in shaping the intellectual history of our time: for, as critics have tried to overcome the Hegelian outlook, their successors have found in it something valuable to which they have returned. Each such return has given new meaning to what it is to be an Hegelian, while to every generation the rediscovery of his work has proved to be of enormous significance. As a result of the profound influence of this *Rezeptionsgeschichte* over the past hundred years, it is possible to excuse the hyperbole in Kojève's assessment, when he declared:

One can therefore say that, for the moment, every interpretation of Hegel, if it is more than idle talk, is nothing but a programme of struggle [*lutte*] and one of work . . . And this means that the work of an interpreter of Hegel takes on the meaning of a work of political propaganda . . . For it may be that, in fact, the future of the world, and therefore the meaning of the present and the significance of the past, depend, in the final analysis, on the way in which the Hegelian writings are interpreted today.⁸⁰

Notes

1. Richard J. Bernstein, 'Why Hegel now?' *Review of Metaphysics*, 31 (1977), pp. 29–60.

2. The following provide useful historical accounts of Hegel's reception in Britain and America: J. H. Muirhead, *The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy* (London: George Allen & Unwin; New York: Macmillan, 1931); Rudolph Metz, *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy* (London: George Allen & Unwin; New York: Macmillan, 1938); William H. Goetzmann 'Introduction', in William H. Goetzmann (ed.), *The American Hegelians* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), pp. 3–18; James Bradley, 'Hegel in Britain: a brief history of British commentary and attitudes', *Heythrop Journal*, 20 (1979), pp. 1–24 and 163–82.

3. William James, 'On some Hegelisms', *Mind*, o.s. 7 (1882), pp. 186–208, p. 186.

4. ' . . . There can still be no doubt that, as a movement of reaction against the traditional British empiricism, the Hegelian influence represents expansion and freedom, and is doing service of a certain kind' (ibid.).

5. Muirhead, *The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy*, p. 322.

6. John Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 51.

7. Examples of readings by J. H. Stirling, Johann B. Stallo and William Torrey Harris, some of Hegel's early interpreters in Britain and America, can be found in Volume I.

8. One contemporary observed: 'Lotze was, historically speaking, the first among modern investigators who, in a psychological, epistemological and philosophical sense, laid bare the secret of the deceptive power of Hegelianism and at the same time, in the most fundamental manner, refuted it. "*Man darf mit vollem Rechte sagen: Lotze hatte Hegel überwunden,*"' (O. Caspari, *Hermann Lotze in seiner Stellung zu der durch Kant begründeten neuesten Geschichte der Philosophie und die philosophische Aufgabe der Gegenwart* (1883); cited Henry Jones, *A Critical Account of the Philosophy of Lotze* (Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1895), p. 30.)

9. See Volume I, pp. 21–31.

10. Jones, *A Critical Account of the Philosophy of Lotze*, pp. 34–5.

11. Another influence, though rather more diffuse, was Schopenhauer, who provided a challenge both to Hegel's apparent optimism and to his intellectualist rationalism.

12. In 1898, Seth changed his name to Pringle-Pattison, as a condition for succeeding to an estate.

13. Andrew Seth, *Hegelianism and Personality* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood, 1887), pp. 111 and 118; see below pp. 24 and 26.

14. See Volume I, pp. 40–68. Seth refers approvingly to Schelling on p. 107 of *Hegelianism and Personality*; see below, p. 22.

15. Seth, *Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 115; see below, p. 25.

16. Seth, *Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 147; see below, p. 38. Cf. Andrew Seth, 'Hegelianism and its critics', *Mind*, n.s. 3 (1894), pp. 1–25, pp. 4–5: 'What I have most strongly attacked in the Hegelian philosophy, both in the concluding lecture of *Scottish Philosophy* and throughout *Hegelianism and Personality*, is just its tendency to hypostatise thoughts or categories and thus to put knowledge in the place of reality, or "to construct the world out of mere universals" – "to deduce existence from pure or abstract thought" . . . Everywhere I have insisted that to speak of the existence of thoughts without a thinker is a meaningless phrase.'

17. James Bradley, 'Hegel in Britain', p. 166.

18. D. G. Ritchie, 'Darwin and Hegel', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1 (1890–1), pp. 55–74, p. 61; see below, p. 46. Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, translated by A. V. Miller (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969), p. 37: 'As impulses [*als Triebe*] the categories are only instinctively active. At first they enter consciousness separately and so are variable and mutually confusing; consequently they afford to mind only a fragmentary and uncertain actuality; the loftier business of logic therefore is to clarify [*zu reinigen*] these categories and in them raise mind to freedom and truth.'

19. J. Ellis McTaggart, 'The changes of method in Hegel's dialectic', *Mind*, n.s. 1 (1892) pp. 56–71, pp. 188–205, pp. 204–5; see below, p. 87.

20. McTaggart, 'The changes of method in Hegel's dialectic', p. 205; see below, p. 88.

21. Seth, 'Hegelianism and its critics', p. 2.

22. Seth himself has suggested this sort of reading in his earlier work, 'Philosophy as criticism of categories', in A. Seth and R. B. Haldane (eds), *Essays in Philosophical Criticism* (London: Longmans, 1883; reprinted Bristol: Thoemmes,

1990), pp. 8–40. He also refers to this approach in *Hegelianism and Personality*, but suggests that Hegel was led astray into a more ‘extravagant’ panlogicism by aiming at presuppositionlessness, with the result that ‘in the exposition of his system, Hegel has suppressed the reference to experience’ (p. 90).

23. Seth, *Hegelianism and Personality*, pp. 218–20.

24. For further details on the origins and development of Personal Idealism, see Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*, pp. 72–94 and Metz, *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*, pp. 380–98.

25. This phrase is used by F. H. Bradley in *Ethical Studies*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927), p. 171. See also *ibid.*, p. 169: ‘we may say that one English child is in some points, though perhaps it does not as yet show itself, the same as another. His being is so far common to him with others; he is not a mere “individual”.’ This, of course, is precisely the form of Hegelianism against which Seth and the Personal Idealists were protesting.

26. Cf. Ritchie, ‘Darwin and Hegel’, pp. 72–3; see below pp. 56–7, and Bernard Bosanquet, *The Philosophical Theory of the State*, pp. 287–95; see below, pp. 133–6.

27. William James, *A Pluralistic Universe* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1977); see below, p. 215.

28. For a full account of Lotze’s influence on James, see the following articles by Otto F. Kraushaar: ‘What James’s philosophical orientation owed to Lotze’, *Philosophical Review*, XLVII (1938), pp. 517–26; ‘Lotze as a factor in the development of James’s radical empiricism and pluralism’, *Philosophical Review*, XLVIII (1939), pp. 455–71; and ‘Lotze’s influence on the pragmatism and practical philosophy of William James’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, I (1940), pp. 439–58.

29. William James, ‘Pragmatism’ and ‘The Meaning of Truth’, with an introduction by A. J. Ayer (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 40.

30. For an account of the relationship between James and Royce, see Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), II, pp. 778–824.

31. None the less, Royce was wary of being labelled an Hegelian, as he made clear in a letter of 1896: ‘As to your first question, I think myself ill described as an Hegelian, just as I think myself ill described as a Kantian, or a Spinozist, or a follower of Socrates. I have learned much from Hegel, as from the others mentioned. I make no doubt, however, that Hegel would have despised me, and I don’t know why the term Hegelian should be applied to all those who, although Idealists, would have been called anti-Hegelians in the early 30’s . . . I make very little of the series of the Hegelian Categories, and so very little of the system as such. Nor have I any system of categories to apply to all topics. I hold in entire contempt the “Philos. of Nature”, and care nothing for the Hegelian technical Psychology (as such), nor anything for the characteristic technicalities of either the *Religionsphilosophie* or the *Rechtsphilosophie*, or the *Aesthetik*, or, – but why particularize? I have fully explained what I regard as the *positive* value of Hegel in my *Spirit of Mod. Phil.* I did not there write down what I have in the way of bones to pick with Hegel’ (Josiah Royce, *The Letters of Josiah Royce*, edited with an introduction by John Clendenning (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 346).

32. Josiah Royce, *Lectures on Modern Idealism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923), p. 82.

33. *ibid.*, pp. 144–5; see below, p. 187. See also *ibid.*, pp. 85–6.

34. The following provide accounts of the relation between Hegel, Peirce and Dewey: Max H. Fisch, 'Hegel and Peirce', in J. T. O'Malley, K. W. Algozin and F. G. Weiss (eds), *Hegel and the History of Philosophy* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), pp. 171–93; H. S. Harris, 'Hegel's System as the Theory and Practice of Interpretation', Vol. III of this collection, pp. 311–28; Burleigh Taylor Wilkins, 'James, Dewey, and Hegelian Idealism', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 17 (1956), pp. 332–46; Richard J. Bernstein, *John Dewey* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), pp. 9–21.

35. See below, pp. 140–50.

36. C. S. Peirce, *Lectures on Pragmatism*, in *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, edited by Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, 8 vols (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958–60), V. p. 27.

37. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 26–8.

38. *ibid.*, pp. 62–4.

39. On this, see Andrew Vincent and Raymond Plant, *Philosophy, Politics and Citizenship: The Life and Thought of the British Idealists* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984).

40. Writing in 1913, George Santayana declared, 'Hegel will be to the next generation what Sir William Hamilton was to the last. Nothing will have been disproved, but everything will have been abandoned' (*Winds of Doctrine: Studies in Contemporary Opinion*, p. 211; cited James Bradley, 'Hegel in Britain', p. 172). Prominent members of this generation who abandoned Hegel are G. E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, J. A. Hobson and L. T. Hobhouse, although there were a few others, such as J. H. Muirhead and R. G. Collingwood, who kept his thought alive.

41. The following studies provide useful historical accounts of Hegel's influence in Italy, including details of his nineteenth-century reception: Edmund E. Jacobitti, *Revolutionary Humanism and Historicism in Modern Italy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981); and Paul Piccone, 'From Spaventa to Gramsci', *Telos*, 10 (1977), pp. 35–65.

42. 'If one wishes to say that Hegel was continued by Spaventa it is analogous . . . to our saying that Hegel is overcome and continued by the left Hegelians' (Giuseppi Berti, 'Bertrandon Spaventa, Antonio Labriola e l'hegelianismo napoletano', *Società*, 10 (1954), pp. 406–30, 583–607, 764–91, p. 427; cited Jacobitti, *Revolutionary Humanism*, p. 33). Likewise, Croce observed in 1913: 'The change of De Sanctis was anything but an abandonment of philosophy and Hegelianism; it was a definitive liberation from certain erroneous concepts of the Hegelian dialectic . . . It was not anti-Hegelianism, but an attempt, however unconscious, to disentangle genuine Hegelianism from abstract scholastic Hegelianism' (Benedetto Croce, *Saggio sullo Hegel* (Bari: Laterza, 1913), p. 375; cited Jacobitti, *Revolutionary Humanism*, p. 183).

43. 'De Sanctis and Spaventa were important factors in the formation of Croce and Gentile: they became amongst the most significant components of Italian consciousness in the twentieth century through the diffusion and the rethinking that they underwent with Croce and Gentile . . . [Yet] it would be a serious error of perspective to attribute to Spaventa and De Sanctis that weight which they assumed only after Croce and Gentile emphasized their relevance and forced Italians to absorb them. In other words, the resonance that they have in the twentieth century should not be confused with their actual echo in their own age; thus, to be precise . . . they belong in the history of the twentieth century' (Eugenio Garin, *Cronache de Filosofia Italiana (1900–1943)* (Bari: Laterza, 1966), I, p. 18; cited Piccone, 'From Spaventa to Gramsci', p. 50).

44. Benedetto Croce, *My Philosophy and Other Essays on the Moral and Political Problems of our Time*, translated by E. F. Carritt (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1949), p. 13.

45. Benedetto Croce, *What is Living and What is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel*, translated by Douglas Ainslie (London: Macmillan, 1915), p. 53.

46. 'Hegel cancels neither the evil nor the ugly, nor the false nor the vain: nothing could be more alien to his conception of reality, so dramatic and in a certain sense so tragic' (ibid., p. 59).

47. ibid., p. 90; see below, p. 254.

48. Cf. ibid., pp. 120–33. In seeking to separate philosophy from art in this way, Croce was following De Sanctis: see Jacobitti, *Revolutionary Humanism*, pp. 50–2.

49. Cf. Croce, *What is Living and What is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel*, pp. 192–202.

50. Croce, *My Philosophy*, p. 17.

51. For a defence of Hegel against Croce's critique, see Bernard Bosanquet, 'Appendix on Croce's conception of the "death of art" in Hegel', in *Science and Philosophy and Other Essays*, edited by J. H. Muirhead and R. C. Bosanquet (London: Macmillan, 1927), pp. 428–37; and Richard Bellamy, 'What is living and what is dead in Croce's interpretation of Hegel', *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, 9 (1984), pp. 5–14.

52. See below, p. 226.

53. The following studies provide useful historical accounts of Hegel's reception in France: Lawrence Pitkethley, 'Hegel in modern France (1900–1950)', unpublished PhD dissertation, University of London, 1975; Michael Kelly, 'Hegel in France to 1940: a bibliographical essay', *Journal of European Studies*, 11 (1981), 29–52; Jacques D'Hondt, *Hegel et l'hégélianisme* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1982). In his article, Kelly stresses that Hegel's thought was better known in nineteenth-century France than is often acknowledged; none the less, there is little doubt that Hegel's work had its most significant impact from 1930 onwards.

54. Wilhelm Dilthey, 'Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels', *Abhandlung der königlichen preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Berlin, 1905); Herman Nohl, *Hegels theologische Jugendschriften* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1907).

55. Speaking in 1972, Wahl explained how he was led towards Hegel by his reading of Kierkegaard: 'I had, I think, begun to study Kierkegaard. and was very much struck by the Kierkegaardian element in Hegel's first thought: that is, I thought deeply that there was what we can call a Kierkegaardian phase to the thought of Hegel' (interview with Jean Wahl, in Pitkethley, 'Hegel in modern France', p. 382). See also Jean Wahl, 'Hegel et Kierkegaard', *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger*, cxii, 11–12 (November–December 1931), pp. 321–80.

56. As Wahl's contemporary, Alexandre Koyré, observed: 'Besides, it was a totally new, quite unexpected Hegel that the *Early Writings* revealed to us. A Hegel who found his place in the splendid movement of the époque and not only in the chronological and systematic table of systems. Hegelian exegesis was turned completely upside down and one could say (without too much exaggeration, we believe) that the whole modern interpretation of Hegel – up to and including the very fine work of Jean Wahl – was dominated by the impression produced by the *Early Writings* by the image of a young romantic Hegel, by the desire to recover under the icy steel of the dialectical formulas something of the passionate ardour that animated the souls of Hölderlin and Schelling' (Alexandre Koyré, 'Hegel à Iéna', *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses*, 1934; reprinted in his

Etudes d'histoire de la pensée philosophique (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), pp. 147–89, p. 149; my translation). Like Wahl, Koyré was a crucial figure in introducing a new picture of Hegel into French intellectual life. Aside from 'Hegel à Iéna', see also 'Note sur la langue et la terminologie hégéliennes' (1931); reprinted in *Etudes d'histoire de la pensée philosophique*, pp. 191–224. For a comparative assessment of Koyré and Wahl, see Michael S. Roth, *Knowing and History: Appropriations of Hegel in Twentieth Century France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 2–10.

57. In conversation with Pitkethley, Wahl denies that he called Hegel the father of existentialism, attributing the thought to Merleau-Ponty and Sartre: see Pitkethley, 'Hegel in modern France', p. 383.

58. For a list of participants at Kojève's seminars, see Roth, *Knowing and History*, pp. 225–8.

59. For an account of Kojève's position that reveal both the Marxist and existentialist aspects of his work, see Patrick Riley, 'Introduction to the reading of Alexandre Kojève', *Political Theory*, 9 (1981), pp. 5–48.

60. Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, see Volume I, p. 168.

61. Alexandre Kojève, 'The idea of death in the philosophy of Hegel'; see below, p. 328.

62. See *ibid.*, pp. 353–4.

63. Alexandre Kojève, 'Hegel, Marx and Christianity'; see below, p. 372.

64. Quoted Pitkethley, 'Hegel in modern France', p. 384. For an assessment of the adequacy of Kojève's reading of Hegel, see George Armstrong Kelly, 'Notes on Hegel's "Lordship and Bondage"', reprinted in volume III, pp. 162–79; Paul Redding, 'Hermeneutic or metaphysical Hegelianism? Kojève's dilemma', *The Owl of Minerva*, 22 (1991), pp. 175–89; Denis J. Goldford, 'Kojève's reading of Hegel', *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 22 (1982), pp. 275–94; and Philip T. Grier, 'The end of history, and the return of history', *The Owl of Minerva*, 21 (1990), pp. 131–44.

65. Jean Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's 'Phenomenology of Spirit'*, translated by Samuel Cherniak and John Heckman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 190.

66. Jean Hyppolite, *Studies on Marx and Hegel*, edited and translated by John O'Neill (London: Heinemann, 1969), p. 23.

67. Hegel, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 49.

68. See *Studies on Marx and Hegel*, pp. vii–viii.

69. 'On the Logic of Hegel' was first published in 1952; see below, pp. 413–25. For a discussion of this and *Logique et existence* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1953) see Roth, *Knowing and History*, pp. 69–80.

70. Hyppolite, 'On the Logic of Hegel'; see below, p. 417.

71. See *ibid.*, p. 424.

72. For an historical study of this interconnection, see Mark Poster, *Existential Marxism in Postwar France: From Sartre to Althusser* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

73. A rather more negative assessment can be found in Louis Althusser, 'Marx's relation to Hegel', reprinted below, pp. 511–28.

74. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, translated by Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1971), p. xxii. It is worth noting that like Wahl, Lukács was also greatly interested in the Hegel–Kierkegaard relation; in 1967 he recalled that 'in the immediate pre-war years [i.e. around 1914] in

Heidelberg I even planned an essay on [Kierkegaard's] criticism of Hegel' (ibid., p. ix).

75. See below, p. 478. Lukács read Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844) in 1930, shortly after they were discovered, and this reading had a clear influence on his subsequent work: see *History and Class Consciousness*, p. xxxvi. For a more recent analysis of the Marx–Hegel relation as revealed by the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* see C. J. Arthur, *Dialectics of Labour: Marx and his Relation to Hegel* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

76. See below, p. 508. Cf. Marx, *Concerning Feuerbach I*: 'The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism (that of Feuerbach included) is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the *object of contemplation*, but not as *sensuous human activity, practice*, but subjectively. Hence, in contradistinction to materialism, the *active side* was developed by idealism' (Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, translated by Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975), p. 421).

77. For a discussion of the influence of Hegel on the Frankfurt school, see Rüdiger Bubner, *Modern German Philosophy*, translated by Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 154–202. The relation between Habermas and Hegel is discussed by Richard Bernstein, Kenley Dove and Habermas himself in Donald Phillip Verne (ed.), *Hegel's Social and Political Thought* (New Jersey: Humanities Press/Sussex: Harvester Press, 1980), pp. 233–50.

78. See, for example, Hegel's discussion of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 328–63.

79. It was this ambivalent process which Adorno and Horkheimer attempted to characterize in their book *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which became one of the most influential texts of the Marx/Hegel debate in Germany.

80. Kojève, 'Hegel, Marx and Christianity', p. 380.

Extract from *Hegelianism and Personality* (1887)

Andrew Seth

Logic as metaphysic: thought and reality

Having thus indicated the relation in which the Hegelian Logic stands to experience, we must next consider the place it holds in the system. Although, as I have said, the centre of Hegel's philosophizing, it forms only the first part of the fully articulated theory. What, then is its relation to the Philosophy of Nature and the Philosophy of Spirit which follow it?

This is a point of no little importance to realize clearly, first in understanding, and second in passing judgment upon the Hegelian system. For, at first sight, it is difficult to see any difference between the Absolute Idea in which the *Logic* culminates and the Absolute Spirit with which Hegel closes the record of Philosophy in general. The Absolute Idea is defined as 'the unity of the Notion and its reality', 'the unity of the subjective and the objective Idea', 'the Idea which thinks itself', 'the Idea which is object to itself', 'the eternal perception of itself in the other, the Notion which has achieved itself in its objectivity'. It is 'both in itself and for itself; it is the *νόησις νοήσεως* which Aristotle long ago termed the supreme form of the Idea'. These designations – all in Hegel's own words – seem essentially identical with what is afterwards said of Mind, Self-consciousness or Absolute Spirit, on its return out of nature, when it gains 'clear prospect o'er its being's whole'. And the relation between the two is not made quite plain by Hegel's manner of treatment. A key will be found, however, if we remember that throughout the *Logic* (in spite of the experiential basis which we have claimed for it) Hegel has been nowhere in direct contact with facts or factual existences. The *Logic* moves, as he tells us himself, in a realm of shades – that is, in less metaphorical language, it deals from beginning to end with abstractions, with general notions, or, to use a technical term, with abstract universals.

In place of Kant's summary table, it professes to be an exhaustive system of the categories. But this is literally all. In following the advance of thought it deals with the notion or conception of Being and the notion or conception of Becoming, but with no actual beings or processes. It considers the categories of substance and cause, but apart from any actual instance of substantial existence or causal agency. And finally, to come to the decisive point, it considers the notion of knowledge and the relative opposition of subject and object which it involves; but as yet there is, and can be, no question of any real knower who might serve as a concrete example of the notion or type. Here, then, we touch the difference between the Absolute Idea and the Absolute Spirit. As the *Logic* deals only with categories or logical abstractions, the Absolute Idea is merely the scheme or form of self-consciousness. In the other case – in the Philosophy of Spirit – we are dealing, or are supposed to be dealing, with realities, facts of existence. Hence the Absolute Spirit is, in the Hegelian system, the one ultimately real existence of which the supreme category of the Logic was a description or definition. The Logic, in short, is ostensibly a logic and nothing more; but in the Philosophy of Nature and the Philosophy of Spirit we are offered a metaphysic or ontology – a theory of the ultimate nature of existence. It must, one would think, be of fundamental importance to clear thinking to keep these two inquiries distinct, and that no matter how intimate their mutual relations may be. But so far is Hegel from doing this that, as I propose to show, he systematically and in the most subtle fashion confounds these two points of view, and ends by offering us *a logic as a metaphysic*. Nor is this merely an implication of his views; for the identification of Logic with Metaphysics is often presented by Hegelians as the gist and outcome of the system. The Hegelian logic, it is said, is not a logic of subjective thought; it is an absolute logic, and constitutes, therefore, at the same time the only possible metaphysic. We have first, then, to consider the path by which Hegel would lead us to a position, on the surface at all events, so extraordinary. After making the nature of the position clear to ourselves in this way, we shall have the materials for forming a judgment as to its philosophical tenability.

With this view, let us turn back to the end of the *Logic* and examine the step which follows. The transition from Logic to nature has long been celebrated as the *mauvais pas* of the Hegelian system. It is, indeed, so remarkable, and so essentially incomprehensible to our habits of thought, that it will be best to keep close to Hegel's own language in formulating it. The Absolute Idea, he says in the larger *Logic*, is 'still logical, still confined to the element of pure thoughts. . . . But inasmuch as the pure idea of knowledge is thus, so far, shut up in a species of subjectivity, it is impelled to remove this limitation: and thus the pure truth, the last result of the Logic, becomes also the beginning of another sphere and

science.' The Idea, he recalls to us, has been defined as 'the absolute unity of the pure notion and its reality' – 'the pure notion which is related only to itself'; but if this is so, the two sides of this relation are one, and they collapse, as it were, 'into the immediacy of Being'. 'The Idea as the totality in this form is *Nature*. This determining of itself, however, is not a process of becoming or a transition' such as we have from stage to stage in the Logic. 'The passing over is rather to be understood thus – that the Idea freely lets itself go, being absolutely sure of itself and at rest in itself. On account of this freedom, the form of its determination is likewise absolutely free – namely, the externality of space and time existing absolutely for itself without subjectivity.' A few lines lower he speaks of the 'resolve (*Entschluss*) of the pure Idea to determine itself as external Idea'.¹ Turning to the *Encyclopaedia* we find, at the end of the smaller Logic, a more concise but substantially similar statement.

'The Idea which exists for itself, looked at from the point of view of this unity with itself, is Perception; and the Idea as it exists for perception is Nature . . . The absolute *freedom* of the Idea consists in this, that in the absolute truth of itself [i.e. according to Hegel's usage, when it has attained the full perfection of the form which belongs to it], it *resolves* to let the element of its particularity – the immediate Idea as its own reflection – go forth freely from itself as Nature.'²

And in the lecture-note which follows we read, as in the larger Logic, 'We have now returned to the notion of the Idea with which we began. This return to the beginning is also an advance. That with which we began was Being, abstract Being, and now we have the *Idea* as Being; but this existent Idea is Nature.' In the beginning of the Philosophy of Nature – the 'new sphere and science' which he referred to as thus inaugurated – no further light is vouchsafed; it is simply stated that Nature has shown itself to be the Idea in the form of otherness.³

What are we to say of the deliberate attempt made in these passages to *deduce* nature from the logical Idea? Simply, I think, that there is no real deduction in the case. The phrases used are metaphors which, in the circumstances, convey no meaning whatever. As Schelling afterwards said, they merely indicate a resolute leap on Hegel's part across 'the ugly broad ditch' which dialectic is powerless to bridge. On this point, few English thinkers are likely to have much difficulty in making up their minds. But if our condemnation is so prompt and decisive – if we condemn the attempt not so much because it has failed as because it was ever made – how are we to account for the form of rigorous deduction which Hegel adopts? Is there no sympathetic explanation to be given of his procedure? To some extent I think there is, if it be remembered that Hegel's true meaning is reached, as I remarked before, by reading him

backward rather than forward. He would certainly have protested against the idea that he was here describing any real process – anything that ever took place; just as he would have protested against the idea that he ever meant to assert a factual existence of the logical Idea by itself, antecedently to the existence of nature and Spirit. Nature itself, we can hear him saying, is an abstraction that cannot *exist*, if by existence is meant independent factual existence on its own account; it exists only relatively to, or within, the life of Spirit, which is therefore in strictness the only existence or fact. But if this is true of nature, it is still more manifestly true of Logic or the system of thought-determinations which sums itself in the Absolute Idea; such a system is admittedly in abstraction, and was never affirmed to exist in *rerum naturā*. Here again, then, as throughout the *Logic*, it might be said we are merely undoing the work of abstraction and retracing our steps towards concrete fact. This, as we have seen, implies the admission that it is our experiential knowledge of actual fact which is the real motive-force impelling us onward – impelling us here from the abstract determinations of the *Logic* to the *quasi*-reality of nature, and thence to the full reality of Spirit. It is because we ourselves are spirits that we cannot stop short of that consummation. In this sense, we can understand the feeling of ‘limitation’ or incompleteness of which Hegel speaks at the end of the *Logic*. The pure form craves, as it were, for its concrete realization. But it need hardly be added that the craving or feeling of incompleteness exists in our subjective thought alone, and belongs in no sense to the chain of thought-determinations itself.

Such, it seems to me, is the explanation which a conciliatory and sober-minded Hegelian would give to Hegel’s remarkable *tour de force*. In treating of Hegel on other occasions,⁴ I have been fain to avail myself of this interpretation, being unable otherwise to put an intelligible meaning into his statements on the subject. For those who accept this reading, Hegel’s clumsy stride from Logic to nature will appear as only an objectionable mode of presentation incident to the synthetic and impersonal form in which he had, once for all, cast his system. Otherwise they will lay as little stress as possible upon the so-called deduction. Further reflection has convinced me, however, that Hegel’s contention here is of more fundamental import to his system than such a representation allows. Perhaps it may even be said that, when we surrender this deduction, though we may retain much that is valuable in Hegel’s thought, we surrender the system as a system. For, however readily he may admit, when pressed, that in the *ordo ad individuum* experience is the quarry from which all the materials are derived, it must not be forgotten that he professes to offer us an *absolute* philosophy. And it is the characteristic of an absolute philosophy that everything must be deduced or constructed as a necessity of thought. Hegel’s system, accordingly, is so framed as to elude the necessity of resting anywhere on mere fact. It is not enough

for him to take self-conscious intelligence as an existent fact, by reflection upon whose action in his own conscious experience and in the history of the race certain categories are disclosed, reducible by philosophic insight to a system of mutually connected notions, which may then be viewed as constituting the essence or formal structure of reason. He apparently thinks it incumbent upon him to prove that Spirit exists by a necessity of thought. The concrete *existence* of the categories (in nature and Spirit) is to be deduced from their *essence* or thought-nature; it is to be shown that they cannot *not* be. When we have mounted to the Absolute Idea, it is contended, we cannot help going further. The *nisus* of thought itself projects thought out of the sphere of thought altogether into that of actual existence. In fact, strive against the idea as we may, it seems indubitable that there is here once more repeated in Hegel the extraordinary but apparently fascinating attempt to construct the world out of abstract thought or mere universals. The whole form and structure of the system and the express declarations of its author at points of critical importance combine to force this conviction upon us. The language used can only be interpreted to mean that thought out of its own abstract nature gives birth to the reality of things.

Hegel's procedure here cannot but recall to our minds the similar reasonings of Plato. There is a difference, no doubt, between categories and class-names; but, otherwise, the resemblance is striking between the abstract chain of the Logic and Plato's system of general notions or Ideas, rising from stage to stage and culminating in the Idea of the Good. The Platonic world of Ideas was not an abstract One, like the principle of the Eleatics; it was itself multiplicity in unity – a *system* of Ideas, each of which was connected with, or, according to the Platonic phrase, participated in, all the rest, the whole series being summed, as it were, in the Idea of the Good. So far we have almost an exact parallel to Hegel's Logic. But for Plato also there arose the necessity of passing beyond this world of pure Ideas. The sensible world – the world of *real* multiplicity and change – pressed itself upon his notice. The sensible world presents us, not with a single changeless type, but with a multitude of ever-changing individuals, which may be said more or less perfectly to exemplify the abstract type, but the determinations of whose real existence are not exhausted by that formal definition. Here Plato also has recourse to a species of 'passing over' on the part of the Ideas. Everyone must have felt how difficult it is at this point, I do not say, to yield assent to what Plato says, but to put any intelligible meaning upon his words. 'We cannot doubt', says Zeller, 'that Plato meant to set forth in Ideas not merely the archetypes and essence of all true existence, but energetic powers; that he regarded them as living and active, intelligent and reasonable.'⁵ They are represented as of themselves creative and as the efficient causes of the manifold and transient shadows of themselves which we

call real things. But even if we grant Plato the self-subsistent existence of his pure forms, and try, *per impossibile*, to follow him in the dynamic efficiency which he ascribes to them, he still fails to give any satisfactory explanation of the indefinite reduplication by the Idea of its own exemplifications, not to speak of other essential features of the sensible world. He is obliged to call in a second principle, the Platonic matter, as it has been called – the unlimited element of space, he would appear to mean – as the condition of separation, diversion, motion, and unlimited repetition. A break-down very similar in this respect will be observed when we come to close quarters with Hegel.

But, it will be said, surely it is impossible to ascribe such crude mythological conceptions to Hegel, who lived, after all, in the nineteenth century. How can we credit him with a point of view which we have even a certain shamefacedness in attributing to Plato? This is undoubtedly an important consideration, and one which may well make us hesitate. But it is not the mythological detail which determines the fundamental similarity of two doctrines; though, to my mind, Hegel's passage from Logic to nature is to the full as mythological as anything we find in Plato.⁶ Even the creative agency assigned to the Ideas is rather a necessary consequence of Plato's doctrine than its distinguishing characteristic. The distinctive feature of the Platonic theory of Ideas, in which it is the type of a whole family of systems, Hegel's among the rest, I take to be its endeavour to construct existence or life out of pure form or abstract thought. Plato's whole account of sensible things is to name the general idea of which they are particular examples; Hegel's whole account of nature is that it is a reflection or realization of the abstract categories of the Logic. If the reality of natural things consists only in this, then creative agency must be attributed, more or less explicitly, to the thought-determinations. In them, at all events, lies the ultimate explanation of so-called existence. If this be admitted, the rest is for the most part matter of expression.

If further corroboration is wanted of the view here taken of the relation of logic and reality in the Hegelian scheme, there are many incidental remarks, besides the official passages already quoted, which present the same idea in a different connection, and in a slightly different form. Nothing, for example, can exceed the scorn which Hegel pours upon 'Being' – which he rarely introduces without pausing to tell us that it is the very poorest and most abstract of notions. 'Certainly', he says, 'it would be strange if the Notion, the very heart of the mind, the Ego, or in one word the concrete totality we call God, were not rich enough to embrace so poor a category as Being, the very poorest and most abstract of all.'⁷ Every reader of Hegel must be familiar with this snort of contempt, which is heard most frequently, it may be noted, when the ontological argument and modern criticisms upon it are under consideration.

But we are apt to be taken in here by Hegel's superior air, under cover of which he evades the real point at issue. He is certainly correct in saying that the category of Being is the poorest and most abstract of all; it is the very least that can be said of a thing. Consequently, if anyone were to suppose that he had done with things when he had simply affirmed their existence, he would undoubtedly be making a great mistake. Instead of being at the end of his task, he is only at the beginning. He must proceed to determine the mode of their existence in a thousand ways before he can be said, even approximately, to give a true account of their nature. In short, the progress of knowledge may very well be described as a continual advance towards greater determinateness. And if we apply this reasoning to the supreme object of thought – in Hegel's language here, to 'the concrete totality we call God' – it is again very evident, as was pointed out in the last lecture, that if we are content simply with an assertion of God's existence, we leave the whole question of the divine nature dark. Because Being is the last result of abstraction, people are apt to imagine that, when they have reached it, they have reached the grandest and most dignified title they can apply; whereas, as Hegel says, it is the most meagre assertion that can be made. Hegel deserves all praise for the persistency with which he has attacked this vicious tendency of thought, and of the scholastic logic in particular, to hark back upon its first abstractions. But when all this is thankfully admitted, the real point at issue remains untouched. When we say that a thing exists or possesses being, we may be saying very little about it; yet that is, on the other hand, the all-important assertion upon which all the rest are based. When we are assured that we are dealing with a reality, we can go from the elementary statement of its existence to a more elaborate description of its nature. But that elementary statement must be originally made in virtue of some immediate assurance, some immediate datum of experience. We must touch reality somewhere; otherwise our whole construction is in the air. Whether we rest content, as the ordinary consciousness apparently does, with the immediacy we seem to have in external perception, or restrict such immediacy to the perception of our own existence – whether we look with some schools at the senses as the type of such assurance or include also the higher feelings and what are called the dictates of the heart – in short, whatever view we may take as to the precise *locus* and scope of such immediate certainty, no sophistry can permanently obscure our perception that the real must be *given*. Thought cannot make it; thought only describes what it finds. That there is a world at all we know only through the immediate assurance, perception or feeling of our own existence, and through ourselves of other persons and things. Kant may have unduly narrowed the meaning of the term 'experience', but there is no circumventing his classical criticism of the ontological argument. There is no evolution possible of a fact from a

conception. The existence of God must either be an immediate certainty, or it must be involved in facts of experience which do possess that certainty.

If, in the light of what has been said, we look once more at Hegel's disparaging reference to 'Being', we see at once the fallacy which it involves if it is intended to apply to the question before us. 'It would be strange', he says, 'if the Notion, the very heart of the mind, the Ego, or in one word, the concrete totality we call God, were not rich enough to embrace so poor a category as Being.' Most assuredly the notion contains the *category* of Being; so does the ego, that is to say, the Idea of the ego, and the Idea of God, both of which are simply the notion under another name. The category of Being is contained in the ego, and may be disengaged from it, much as, in the old logic of the schools, the notion 'man' could be made to yield up successively the notion 'animal', 'substance' and the rest, and eventually the very notion in question – Being. But when we ask for real bread, why put us off with a logical stone like this? It is not the *category* 'Being' of which we are in quest, but that reality of which all categories are only descriptions, and which itself can only be experienced, immediately known, or lived. To such reality or factual existence there is no logical bridge; and thoughts or categories have meaning only if we assume, as somehow given, a real world to which they refer.

But even if we waive objections which, I think, are insuperable, and allow Hegel to take this impossible leap from Logic to nature, there remains the essential further question: what account does he give of the nature thus boldly deduced? Is it an account at once credible and sufficient?

Nature, Hegel tells us, is the Idea or thought in the form of otherness, in the form of externality to itself. Or again, more metaphorically, he quotes Schelling's saying that nature is a petrified intelligence, or as others have said, a frozen intelligence;⁸ or it might be described, he says again, as the corpse of the understanding. Still more poetically he says: 'Nature is spirit in alienation from itself. Hence the study of nature is the liberation of spirit in nature or the liberation of nature itself; for nature is potentially reason, but only through the spirit does this inherent rationality become actual and apparent. Spirit has the certainty which Adam had when he saw Eve. This is flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone. For Nature is in like manner the bride to which Spirit is wedded . . . The inner heart of nature (*das Innere der Natur*) is nothing but the universal; hence, when we have thoughts, we recognise in nature's inner heart only our own reason and feel ourselves at home there.'⁹ But we must not be carried away by the poetry of passages which recall the rich metaphors of Bacon and Wordsworth. For when we inquire more

narrowly into the Self or Spirit, which we recognize in nature under its form of estrangement, it is found to be neither more nor less than the logical categories – the notion. This is implied, indeed, in the very passage quoted, by the introduction of the phrase ‘the universal’; and it is made more explicit in a passage of the *Encyclopaedia* which conveys the same thought: ‘The aim of knowledge is to divest the objective world that stands opposed to us of its strangeness, and, as the phrase is, to find ourselves at home in it – which means no more than to trace the objective world back to the Notion, which is our inmost self.’¹⁰ And in another passage he expressly gives this explanation of his phrases about thought as the kernel of the world, and nature as a system of unconscious thought: ‘Instead of using the term Thought (*Gedanken*), it would be better, in order to avoid misconception, to say category, or thought-determination (*Denkbestimmung*). For logic [which he has a few lines before identified with metaphysic] is the search for a system of thought-determinations in which the opposition between subjective and objective, in its usual sense, vanishes.’¹¹ This system is, of course, the chain of categories unrolled in the *Logic*, which, forming, as it were, the common basis of nature and mind, is spoken of by Hegel as ‘the absolute and self-existent ground of the universe’.¹² Indeed, in his own words in the same connection, ‘the Philosophy of Nature and the Philosophy of Mind take the place, as it were, of an Applied Logic, and Logic is the soul which animates them both. *Their problem is only to recognise the logical forms under the shapes they assume in Nature and Mind – shapes which are only a particular mode of expression for the forms of pure thought.*’¹³

But if men and things are merely types or exemplifications of logical notions, what constitutes the difference, we may ask, between the category, as such, in the *Logic* and the category, as thing, in nature?¹⁴ If nature is ‘the other’ of thought, thought in estrangement or alienation from itself, what is it that makes the otherness the alienation? What is the nature of the ‘petrification’ that thought experiences? Hegel is fain to speak of it in many places as *materiature*.¹⁵ Similarly, Dr Stirling says that Hegel ‘demonstrates the presence of the notion in the most crass, refractory, extreme externality – demonstrates all to be but a *concretion* of the notion’.¹⁶ Now I maintain that the whole problem of reality as such is wrapped up in these metaphorical phrases – otherness, petrification, *materiature*, *concretion* – and that by evading the question, Hegel virtually declines to take account of anything but logical abstractions. He offers us, in a word, a logic in place of a metaphysic; and it may be unhesitatingly asserted that such a proposal, if taken literally, is not only untenable, but absurd. ‘Neither gods nor men’, as Dr Stirling says, when speaking in his own person, ‘are in very truth logical categories’¹⁷ – and the same may be said of every natural thing. A living dog is better than a dead lion, and even an atom is more than a category. It at least exists

as a reality, whereas a category is an abstract ghost, which may have a *meaning* for intelligent beings, but which, divorced from such real beings and their experience, is the very type of a *non-ens*.

I am far from denying that we may truly speak of the categories as realized in nature, just as we speak, in a wider way, of the world as the realization or manifestation of reason. But we must recognize the *quasi*-metaphorical nature of the language used, which simply means that the world gives evidence of being constructed on a rational plan. To discover the categories in nature means no more than to understand nature by their means; from which it is a legitimate inference that nature is laid out, as we may say, according to these conceptions. Hegel apparently says, on one occasion, that his own elaborate phraseology means no more than the ancient position that *νοῦς* rules the world, or the modern phrase, there is Reason in the world.¹⁸ If the system is reducible to this very general proposition, our objections would certainly fall to the ground; but Hegel's own expressions go a long way further. His language would justify us in believing that the categories actually take flesh and blood and walk into the air, and that the whole frame of nature is no more than a duplicate or reflection of the thought-determinations of the Logic. Nor is this merely a forced interpretation put upon his words. It is, as will be more fully seen in the following lecture, if not his deliberate meaning, still a real tendency of his thought. When he speaks, therefore, of the categories as the heart or kernel of nature, we require to be on our guard against the idea that logical abstractions can *thicken*, as it were, into real existences. Categories are not the skeleton round which an indefinite 'materiature' gathers to form a thing. The meanest thing that exists has a life of its own, absolutely unique and individual, which we can partly *understand* by terms borrowed from our own experience, but which is no more identical with, or in any way like, the description we give of it than our own inner life is identical with the description we give of it in a book of philosophy. Existence is one thing; knowledge is another. But the logical bias of the Hegelian philosophy tends, as I have said, to make this essential distinction disappear, and to reduce things to mere types or 'concretions' of abstract formulæ. 'Hegel is so complete', says Dr Stirling in the context of the passage previously quoted, 'that he leaves existential reality at the last as a mere abstraction, as nothing when opposed to the work of the notion.'¹⁹ That is just what I complain of. The result of Hegel's procedure would really be to sweep 'existential reality' off the board altogether, under the persuasion, apparently, that a full statement of all the thought-relations that constitute our knowledge of the thing is equivalent to the existent thing itself. On the contrary, it may be confidently asserted that there is no more identity of Knowing and Being with an infinity of such relations than there was with one.

Hegel's position, or the tendency of his thought, may again be aptly

illustrated, I think, by two passages from Schelling. 'In the highest perfection of natural science', he tells us in the *Transcendental Idealism*, 'the phenomenal or material element must disappear entirely, and only the laws, or the formal element, remain. . . . The more law becomes apparent in nature, the more the hull or wrapping disappears; the phenomena themselves become more spiritual, and *at last cease altogether* (*zuletzt völlig aufhören*). Optical phenomena are nothing more than a system of geometry whose lines are drawn by the light, and the material nature of this light itself is already doubtful. In the phenomena of magnetism all trace of matter has already vanished, and of the phenomena of gravitation nothing remains but their law, the carrying out of which on a great scale constitutes the mechanism of the heavenly movements.'²⁰ And in another place we read: 'The Philosophy of Nature gives an account of what is immediately positive in nature, without attending to space, for example, and the rest of such nullities (*den Raum und das übrige Nichtige*). It sees in the magnet nothing but the living law of Identity, and in matter only the unfolded copula in the shape of gravitation, cohesion, &c.'²¹ Surely, on reading a passage like this, we instinctively feel that the reality or qualitative existence of things is being spirited away from us under a metaphor. It may be very well for a philosophy so conceived to 'abstract' from what it cannot explain; but for all that, the magnet is neither the law of identity, as Schelling sets it down, nor the syllogism, as Hegel would have it to be.²² In short, whatever truth such passages²³ may have as accounts of the progress of knowledge, they leave the metaphysical question of existence untouched. Whatever importance we attach, and rightly attach, in philosophy to the universal or the formal, the individual alone is the real.

It cannot be supposed that Hegel was blind to a plain truth like this, and accordingly passages might easily be quoted which apparently admit all that has been said. But the form which such admissions take in Hegel is characteristic. While not denying the individual character of existence, he yet adroitly contrives to insinuate that, because it is indefinable, the individual is therefore a valueless abstraction. 'Sensible existence', he says, for example, 'has been characterised by the attributes of individuality and a mutual exclusion of its members. It is well to remember that these very attributes are thoughts and general terms. . . . Language is the work of thought; and hence all that is expressed in language must be universal. . . . And what cannot be uttered, feeling or sensation, far from being the highest truth, is the most unimportant or untrue. If I say "the unit", "this unit", "here", "now", all these are universal terms. Everything and anything is an individual, a "this", or if it be sensible, is here and now. Similarly, when I say "I", I *mean* my single self, to the exclusion of all others; but what I *say*, viz., "I", is just every other "I", which in like manner excludes all others from itself. . . . All other men have it in

common with me to be "I".²⁴ This demonstration of the universal, or, to put it perhaps more plainly, the abstract, nature of thought, even in the case of those terms which seem to lay most immediate hold upon reality, is both true and useful in its own place. But the legitimate conclusion from it in the present connection is not Hegel's insinuated disparagement of the individual, but rather that which Trendelenburg draws from the very same considerations, that the individual, as such, is incommensurable or unapproachable by thought.²⁵ Or, as Mr Bradley puts it still more roundly and trenchantly, 'The real is inaccessible by way of ideas. . . . We escape from ideas, and from mere universals, by a reference to the real which appears in perception.'²⁶

If there is an approach to disingenuousness in Hegel's manner of turning the tables upon reality here, his treatment of the most characteristic feature of nature, and real existence in general, displays a much more unmistakable infusion of the same quality.

Nature has been defined as 'the other' of reason, that is, it is in some way the duplicate or reflection of the thought-determinations of the *Logic*. Conceptions which were there regarded in their abstract nature are now exhibited as realized in actual existences. In Hegel's own formal definition, towards the beginning of the *Naturphilosophie*, 'Nature is to be regarded as a system of grades, the one of which proceeds necessarily from the other, and constitutes its proximate truth; not, however, in such a way that the one is *actually* produced out of the other, but in the inner idea which is the ground of nature.'²⁷ In other words, the Philosophy of Nature gives us a system or ascending series of types, in which we pass from space and gravitation, at the one end of the scale, to the animal organism at the other. Speaking with some latitude, we may be said to pass, in such a progress, from the most abstract and imperfect analogue of self-conscious existence to the very brink of the appearance of consciousness in the world. The course of the exposition is swelled and distorted by the mass of empirical matter which Hegel takes from the special sciences, and forces, often violently enough, into the forms of his system; but the method followed is intended to be substantially similar to that of the *Logic*. The whole system of types, moreover, is to be taken as an ideal development. It has nothing to do with the possible evolution of the planetary system out of a simpler state of mutually attracted vaporous particles, with the origin of life from the non-living, or with the evolution of one animal type from another, as set forth in the Darwinian theory. With these questions of scientific evolution philosophy does not deal, according to Hegel's statement above; his own evolution is, as he would say, a timeless evolution like that of the logical categories. That is to say, he contemplates the system of types as existing eternally side by side, all being necessary to the entirety of the system. 'The notion',

he says, 'thrusts all its particularity at once into existence. It is perfectly empty to represent the species as evolving themselves gradually in time; the time-difference has absolutely no interest for thought.'²⁸ This embodies a profound truth, as I conceive, with regard to the philosophy of evolution, but we are not concerned with that aspect of the position here. What is evident from these questions is that nature is, in a manner, reduced by Hegel to a static system of abstract types.

But a mere glance at nature suffices to show that its leading feature, as contrasted with the logical necessity which links the different parts of a rational system together, is its pure matter-of-factness – I will not say its irrational, but its non-rational or alogical character. Things lie side by side in space, or succeed one another in time, with perfect indifference; there is no logical passage from the one to the other. Why should there be just so many planets in our system, and no more? And why should their respective sizes be just as they are? Why should one of them have been rent into fragments and not the rest? Why should the silver streak cut England off from Continental Europe? Why should any island rise in ocean precisely where it does? Why should there be an island there at all, and if an island, why not a mile to eastward or to westward? No doubt, in many cases, we may be able to give what is called a reason for these facts – i.e. we may be able to point to a certain previous distribution of things from which they necessarily resulted. It is conceivable that if our knowledge were perfect, we should be able to account in this way for the exact position of each minutest grain of sand. But the ultimate collocation to which we traced the present arrangement would be as far removed as ever from logical or rational necessity: it would be *a mere collocation*, something wholly alogical, to be accepted as a matter of fact. The same thing might be further exemplified by appeal to another aspect of the world – an aspect which is coextensive with our whole experience of external nature. What logical connection is there between the different qualities of things – between the smell of a rose, for example, and its shape; or between the taste of an orange and its colour? These qualities are found together, as matter of fact, but no process of reasoning could possibly lead us from the one to the other. Then, to go back to Hegel's idea of a system of types, what are we to say of the indefinite multiplicity of individuals in which the type is realized? Why should there be more than one perfect example of each? Of all this there is no account in Hegel; yet it is the most characteristic feature of real existence. As Professor James of Harvard says – 'The parts seem to be shot out of a pistol at us. Each asserts itself as a simple brute fact, uncalled for by the rest, which, so far as we can see, might even make a better system without it. Arbitrary, foreign, jolting, discontinuous – are the adjectives by which we are tempted to describe it.'²⁹

It was not possible for Hegel altogether to ignore the aspect of existence

emphasized in the last paragraph, but he seems to think that by *naming* the difficulty he has got rid of it. He calls it contingency, and opposes it to the necessity of the notion: 'The contradiction of the Idea in its state of externality to itself as nature, is, more particularly, the contradiction between the necessity infused by the Notion into nature's formations (and their consequent rational determination as members of an organic totality), and, on the other hand, their indifferent contingency and indeterminate lawlessness. Contingency and liability to determination from without have their right within the sphere of nature.'³⁰ But then follows the audacious stroke by which Hegel endeavours to turn the tables upon reality. It is nature's fault, not the philosopher's, he says in effect, that facts behave in this alogical way. 'It is the *impotence* of nature that it maintains the determinations of the Notion only in an abstract or general fashion, and leaves the execution of the particular exposed to determination from without.' Again, he says: 'Nature is Spirit in alienation from itself, which, as released out of itself, is full of freaks, a bacchantic god, who does not rein himself in and keep himself in hand; in nature the unity of the notion is concealed.'³¹ He expresses the same idea more prosaically, but not less strongly, in the introduction to the *Encyclopaedia*: 'The Idea of nature, when it is individualised, loses itself in contingencies. Natural history, geography, medicine, &c., have to deal with determinations of existence, with species and distinctions which are determined not by reason, but by sport and external accident.'³² Finally, when the point comes up in connection with the category of contingency in the *Logic*, Hegel takes occasion to make a disparaging remark upon the admiration sometimes lavished upon nature for its richness and variety: 'In its vast variety of structures, organic and inorganic, nature affords us only the spectacle of a contingency that runs riot into endless detail. At any rate, the checkered scene presented by the several varieties of animals and plants, conditioned as it is by outward circumstances, the complex changes in the figuration and grouping of clouds, and the like, ought not to be set above the equally casual fancies of the mind which surrenders itself to its own caprices.'³³ 'Contingency, however', he proceeds, 'has, *no less than other forms of the Idea*, its due office in the world of objects. This is seen, in the first instance, in nature, on whose surface, so to speak, contingency ranges unchecked – a fact which must simply be recognised without the pretension which is sometimes, but erroneously, ascribed to philosophy of seeking to find in it something which can only be as it is, and not otherwise.'³⁴

These passages, more particularly the last, contain a curious combination of two points of view, one of which is wholly untenable, while the other is not open to a system like Hegel's. The first is that contingency is itself a category, a form of the Idea which, when the Idea is realized, must be represented and have its scope as well as the other categories.

By calling a thing contingent, therefore, we seem to be making an assertion about it which brings it within the range of our rational system. But this is surely the most transparent fallacy. For, to say that a thing is contingent or accidental is to say, in so many words, that we can give no rational account of why it is as it is, and not otherwise. It is hard to see how the saying that we have no explanation to give can be interpreted as itself the very explanation wanted. A system of rationalism which talks of what is 'determined not by reason but by sport and external accident' must fairly be held to acknowledge a breakdown in its attempt to grasp the whole of existence. Hegel makes this acknowledgement, after a fashion, in what may be distinguished as a second point of view. He says that we must not pretend to reduce this contingency to reason, or, as he expresses it in the *Naturphilosophie* – 'The impotence of nature sets limits to philosophy, and it is most unseemly to demand of the Notion that it shall comprehend such contingencies, and, as it is called, construct or deduce them.' But he throws the blame on Nature. If we cannot rationalize the facts, that is merely because the facts are of no interest or importance to reason. Now, in a sense, this is a position which no one would think of disputing. So far as the *meaning* of the universe is concerned, it may be said that it does not matter whether such details are arranged in this way or in that way. And to expound the meaning of the universe constitutes, it may be argued, the essential task of philosophy. Philosophy has to show that the world embodies a rationally satisfying End, which does not fail of realization; but it is of necessity precluded from taking any notice of the individual facts, whether persons or things, in which this meaning, End or Idea is realized. There is a certain amount of truth in this contention, though I venture to think that such a philosophy would remain seriously incomplete on its metaphysical side. But however that may be, Hegel, as the propounder of an absolute system, is not entitled to hold such language. It might be intelligible on the part of a philosophy which, professedly starting with the tangled facts of experience, endeavoured to trace in them a thread of rational purpose, and thus work its way to the more or less confident assertion of a rational harmony or system. But it is otherwise with a philosophy which sets out from a completed system of thought, and professes to explain the factual world to its inmost fibre out of reason. Because it starts from the contingent individual facts of experience, the first system is in no danger of abolishing its own standing-ground. But for a system like Hegel's to waive aside all consideration of mere matter-of-fact means not so much that the matter-of-fact basis is taken for granted as that it is systematically ignored. And an important practical result will be that the End in which the meaning of the world is found will be the realization of some abstract idea, without any regard for the individuals for whom alone it can be realized, and whose existence is, after all, the only reality. The universe

will tend to shrink together into a logical process, of which individuals are merely the foci.

It will be seen in the next lecture that this is a special danger of the Hegelian system.

Appendix

It may be instructive and not without interest to place on record the expressed opinions of Kant and Fichte on the question of real existence. They will be found (what we should hardly expect in the case of Fichte) to form an effective contrast to the tendency of Hegelian thought as indicated above. The comparison is the more easily made since Hegel in his *Logic* is going over essentially the same ground as Kant in the 'Transcendental Logic' and Fichte in the theoretical part of the *Wissenschaftslehre*.

Of Kant not much requires to be said. To him, of course, the categories are mere empty forms without the matter of sense. For the rest, his position has been indicated above. Every existential proposition, he says, is synthetical. Its truth can only be ascertained *a posteriori*, or by a reference to experience. Hence existence is something which no notion or system of notions can give us. This is the line of thought which he brings to bear with conclusive force upon the ontological argument for the existence of God, and Hegel's persistent attempts to rehabilitate that argument are not without significance for a final estimate of his own system.

Kant, as is well known, criticized Fichte's system (in his public declaration on the subject) as 'neither more nor less than a mere logic, whose principles do not reach the material element in knowledge, but which, on the contrary, *as pure logic*, abstracts from the content of cognition. To extract from pure logic a real object is a futile task, and hence one which has never been essayed.'³⁵ But though there is much in the form of the *Wissenschaftslehre* to justify this censure, it is less than just to Fichte. It is, however, by anticipation, a very apt description of Hegel's procedure. Fichte expressly guards himself against the imputation in question. The theoretical part of the *Wissenschaftslehre* corresponds, as has been said, to Hegel's *Logic*;³⁶ and at the end of this analysis Fichte tells us that the whole inquiry has been moving hitherto in a world of unrealities. We have been talking of the ego, he says, but, so far, we have been talking 'of a mere relation without anything that stands in relation – from which something, indeed, complete abstraction is made in the whole theoretical part of the "Wissenschaftslehre"'.³⁷ In other words, we have been talking of the notion of the ego, but not of any real ego; we have been dealing throughout with abstractions, not with real existences.

Similarly, on coming to the second part of his investigation, he says: 'In the theoretical "Wissenschaftslehre" we have to do solely with *knowledge*; here, in the practical part, with *what is known*. In the former case, the question is, *How* is anything posited, perceived, or thought [i.e. what are the formal conditions of knowledge – what is the notion of knowledge in general]? in the present case it is, *What* is posited? If, therefore, the 'Wissenschaftslehre' is to be taken as a metaphysic, it must refer the inquirer to its practical part, for this alone speaks of a primitive reality.'³⁸ A little later, he is speaking of feeling, which ordinary consciousness attributes to the action of a thing, but which Fichte maintains to be due to the ego itself, and he adds this emphatic statement: 'Here lies the ground of all reality. Solely through the reference of feeling to the Ego is reality possible for the Ego, whether it be the reality of the Ego itself or of the Non-Ego. . . . Our attitude to *reality in general*, whether of the Ego or the Non-Ego, is one of *belief* and nothing more.'³⁹ 'To forget this original feeling', he says elsewhere, 'leads to a baseless transcendent Idealism and an incomplete philosophy which cannot explain the merely sensible predicates of objects.'⁴⁰ It is true that Fichte does not leave this feeling a mere fact, as Kant did; he refers it to the needs of the moral life, thus seeking, as it were, to rationalize it and bring it within the compass of his monism. But what we are here concerned with is his insistence upon feeling as the only point where we touch solid ground and get a basis for our whole structure. The same point of view is still more impressively urged in the eloquent *Bestimmung des Menschen*, which he wrote in 1800 for use outside the schools; it forms, indeed, the turning-point of the whole discussion.

This treatise is divided into three books, the first of which, entitled 'Doubt', portrays the misery of a man entangled in materialism and fatalism, through viewing himself simply as a natural thing among other things – a mere wheel in the vast machine of the universe. The second book, entitled 'Knowledge', describes his deliverance from such fears by the Kantio-Fichtian theory of knowledge. He is made to recognize the inner impossibility of the position which Fichte designates Dogmatism – the impossibility, that is to say, that a system of mere things should give rise to the unique fact of self-consciousness. On the contrary, he finds that the mere object is an unrealizable abstraction, and that the whole of the natural world, in which he seemed to be imprisoned as an insignificant part, exists only as a phenomenon – that is relatively to the consciousness which it threatened at first to engulf. But the midst of his exultation there is suddenly borne in upon him the conviction that such a deliverance is, after all, purely illusory. For the demonstration has simply shown that all objects must, as such, be brought under the form of the knowing self. But such a self has no predicates of reality about it; it is simply a formal point of unity for the process of knowledge. If the system of things is

reduced to ideas or objects in consciousness, he himself is likewise resolved into a mere *Vorstellen* or process of ideas without significance or aim, because without self-initiated activity.⁴¹ When this insight is reached, Fichte turns upon his anxious inquirer and upbraids him for supposing that this theory – which represents the theoretical *Wissenschaftslehre* – was to be taken as a complete system of the human spirit. ‘Didst thou imagine’, he says, ‘that these results were not as well known to me as to thee? . . . Thou askedst to know of thy knowledge. Dost thou wonder, then, that upon this path nothing more is to be found than just what thou desiredst to know – thy knowledge? . . . What arises through knowledge and out of knowledge is only a knowing. But all knowing is only representation or picture, and there always arises the demand for something which shall correspond to the picture. This demand no knowledge can satisfy. . . . But, at least, the reality whose slave thou fearedst to be – the reality of an independent sensible world – has vanished. For this whole sensible world arises only through knowledge, and is itself part of our knowledge. . . . This is the sole merit of which I boast in the system which we have but now discovered together. It destroys and annihilates error; truth it cannot give, because in itself it is absolutely empty.’

Only in the third book, entitled ‘Belief’ or ‘Faith’, does Fichte proceed at last to satisfy the demand of his disciple for reality, and to communicate his own final position. ‘There is something in me’, he says, ‘which impels to absolute, independent, self-originated activity. . . . I ascribe to myself the power of forming an idea or plan, and likewise the power, through a real action, of embodying this idea beyond the world of ideas (*ausser dem Begriffe*). I ascribe to myself, in other words, a real active force – a force which produces being, and which is quite different from the mere faculty of ideas. The ideas or plans spoken of above, usually called ends or purposes, are not to be considered, like the ideas of cognition, as after-pictures of something given; they are rather fore-pictures, or exemplars of something which is to be produced. The real force, however, does not lie in them; it exists on its own account, and receives from them only its determinate direction, knowledge looking on, as it were, as a spectator of its action. Such independence, in fact, I ascribe to myself in virtue of the afore-mentioned impulse.’ ‘Here’, he proceeds, ‘lies the point to which the consciousness of all reality is attached. This point is the real activity of my idea, and the real power of action which I am obliged, in consequence, to attribute to myself. However it may be with the reality of a sensible world external to me, I myself am real; I take hold on reality here; it lies in me, and is there at home. This real power of action of mine may doubtless be made an object of thought or knowledge, but at the basis of such thought lies the immediate feeling of my impulse to self-originated activity. Thought does nothing but picture or represent this feeling, and take it up into its own form of thought.’ Actual existence,

in brief, or the consciousness of reality, is reached, according to Fichte, only in will, or in the immediate feeling of my own activity. Even in opposition to the sceptical doubts which the understanding may subsequently raise as to a possible self-deception, this feeling must be accepted as our only firm standing-ground; it must be *believed*. Belief is 'the organ with which I lay hold upon reality'.

These quotations have run almost to undue length. But Fichte's testimony is especially important in view of his constitutionally deductive mind and his fondness of construction whenever an opening for it could be found. The passages quoted show him laying stress, even in his earliest writings, upon the essentially *given* character of reality. It must be lived or experienced if we are to know of its existence at all; our relation to it must be that of immediate consciousness or feeling. Knowledge may afterwards take up this datum into its own forms, but knowledge stands always in this dependent or parasitical relation to reality. It is the picture or representation, the symbol of what is real; but as Fichte says, 'Knowledge just because it is knowledge is not reality.' It comes not first but second. As Schelling put it in his later writings – 'Not because there is thought is there existence, but because there is existence is there thought.' Or as we might express the same thing, connecting it with our parallel between Hegel and Plato, real things are not the shadows of intellectual conceptions, but intellectual conceptions are themselves the shadows of a real world. Nor is it allowable to reply that this is true only of human thought, and that the real world must still be admitted to be but the shadow of a divine or absolute thought. For, in the first place, God is included in the real world when that term is taken in its fullest extent, and the divine thoughts evidently presuppose the divine existence – a divine being whose thoughts they are. And, second, though we may perhaps speak of the real world in the narrower sense, as shadows or effects of the creative thoughts of God, the thoughts in that case are not active of themselves. 'The real force', as Fichte says above, 'does not lie in them': it lies in the divine Being as living active Will.

But here again Hegel parts company with Fichte. Just as he apparently makes a systematic attempt to deduce existence from pure or abstract thought, so the divine existence itself tends to shrink in his hands into a priority of certain logical notions, to which, as we have seen in the foregoing lecture, a dynamic or creative efficiency is attributed. This fact – which will be fully discussed in the lectures that follow – appears to be a striking confirmation of the view taken above of Hegel's real meaning.

Notes

1. *Werke*, (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1832ff.) v. 352, 353.
2. *Werke*, vi. 413, 414; Wallace, *Hegel's Logic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1873), 328. The italics are Hegel's own throughout.
3. A third account in some detail is given in the Philosophy of Religion (*Werke*, xii. 206–8), and forms in some respects a useful gloss upon the more authoritative and would-be scientific statements quoted in the text. This account is referred to in Lecture V [of *Hegelianism and Personality*], pp. 163 et sq.
4. In the *Development from Kant to Hegel*, and in *Mind*, vi. 513 et sq.
5. *Plato and the Older Academy*, 267.
6. Perhaps, too, we in England, and at the present day, hardly realize the extraordinary intellectual atmosphere in which the Hegelian system was produced. A time of philosophical zymosis or seething, Dr Stirling has styled the period: it was a time in which system chased system, and in which men ran riot in the most imaginative conceptions. Without leaving the ranks of the *dii majores*, who were also comparatively the saner spirits of the movement, I may quote a passage from Schelling's *Lectures on the Method of Academic Study*, which illustrates to some extent the intellectual tone of the time. The passage occurs at the beginning of the eleventh lecture, in a discussion of the very point adverted to in the text – the relation of nature to the Ideas, as he calls them after Plato. 'God's mode of producing or creating', he says, 'is a pouring of His whole universality and essentiality into particular forms, whereby the latter, though special or particular, are yet *universa*, what the philosophers have called Monads or Ideas. . . . Now, though the Ideas in God are pure and absolutely ideal, yet they are not dead but living, the first organisms of the divine self-perception, which, on that very account, participate in all the qualities of His nature, and in spite of their particular form share in His undivided and absolute reality. In virtue of this participation they are, like God, productive, and work according to the same law and in a similar fashion. That is, they infuse their essence, as it were, into particular forms and reveal it through individual and particular things, though themselves timeless, and only from the standpoint of individual things, and for such individual things, existing in time. The Ideas are related to things as their souls; the things are their bodies.'
- Even if what is here asserted of the Ideas is a delegated life and activity, inasmuch as it is said to belong to the conceptions as elements in the divine life, yet there is still the same personification of abstract conceptions as with Plato, and a real activity is similarly attributed to them. If, then, we bear in mind that Schelling was Hegel's philosophical associate, or senior partner, so to speak, for several years – in fact, up to the very year (1803) in which this passage was published – and if we remember that, as regards the Philosophy of Nature in particular, Hegel did little more than adapt the ideas so prodigally thrown out by Schelling, I cannot but think that such a passage forms rather a sinister gloss upon some of Hegel's own expressions.
7. Wallace's *Logic of Hegel*, 92.
8. *Werke*, vi. 46; Wallace, 39.
9. *Werke*, vii. 22.
10. *Werke*, vi. 367.
11. *ibid.*, vi. 46; Wallace, 39.
12. *ibid.*, vi. 51; Wallace, 42.
13. Wallace, 41, 42.
14. Restricting ourselves for the present to the case of nature, though the

assertion is made by Hegel equally of 'the Philosophy of Nature and the Philosophy of Spirit'.

15. *Materiatur*.

16. *Secret of Hegel*, i. 177. The italics are mine.

17. Schwegler, 476.

18. *Werke* vi. 46; Wallace, 39; in the context of some of the passages already quoted.

19. *Secret of Hegel*, i. 177.

20. *Werke*, I. iii. 340.

21. 'Darlegung des wahren Verhältnisses der Naturphilosophie zu der verbesserten Fichte'schen Lehre', *Werke*, I. vii. 64.

22. See Wallace, 42.

23. For a very similar passage in Hegel himself, see *ibid.*, 35, 36.

24. *ibid.*, 32.

25. 'Das Einzelne ist an sich das dem Denken Incommensurable.' *Logische Untersuchungen*, ii, 230.

26. *Principles of Logic*, 63, 69.

27. *Werke*, vii. 32.

28. *Werke*, vii. 33.

29. *Mind*, vii. 187.

30. *Werke*, vii. 36.

31. *ibid.*, vii. 24. There is a play in the original upon the word *ausgelassen*, which means both 'released' or 'let out' and 'full of freaks or riotous mirth'.

32. 'Die von äusserlichem Zufall und vom Spiele, nicht durch Vernunft bestimmt sind.' *Werke*, vi. 24; Wallace, 21.

33. It is perhaps worth remarking that Hegel's instances, being of an especially unimportant nature, tend to disguise the fact that what he calls contingency is coextensive with the whole range of existence as such. Thus, it is not merely my 'casual fancies' that display contingency, but the whole course of my thoughts looked at as a process of events in time, that is to say, my whole subjective or individual experience.

34. *Werke*, vi. 288, 290; Wallace, 227, 228.

35. *Werke*, viii, 600.

36. It is, of course, far from being so exhaustive, and the order of the deduction is the reverse of Hegel's, beginning with the notion of the ego as a synthesis of subject and object, and deducing a variety of categories from that relation. But differences of procedure do not affect the correspondence in aim of the two undertakings.

37. *Werke*, i. 207.

38. *ibid.*, i. 285.

39. *ibid.*, i. 301. 'An Realität überhaupt . . . findet lediglich ein Glaube statt.'

40. *ibid.*, i. 490. This passage is from the Second Introduction to the *Wissenschaftslehre*, published in 1797; the previous passages are from the *Wissenschaftslehre* itself.

41. 'Ich selbst weiss überhaupt nicht, und bin nicht. Bilder sind; sie sind das Einzige was da ist, und sie wissen von sich nach Weise der Bilder: Bilder die vorüberschweben, ohne dass etwas sei, dem sie vorüberschweben . . . Bilder ohne etwas in ihnen Abgebildetes, ohne Bedeutung und Zweck. . . . Alle Realität verwandelt sich in einen wunderbaren Traum, ohne ein Leben von welchem geträumt wird, und ohne einen Geist, dem da träumt.' *Werke*, ii. 245.

Darwin and Hegel (1890)

D. G. Ritchie

In every age philosophy has been affected by the sciences, i.e. the methods and conceptions which are used in the attempt to make some particular province or aspect of the universe intelligible have exercised a fascination over those who are seeking to understand the universe as a whole. And this is only natural: for the philosopher, who is really the philosopher of his own age and not the survival from an earlier epoch, is the product of the same intellectual movement which has led to the adoption of new methods and new conceptions among those who are pursuing special branches of knowledge. The difference between the genuine philosopher and the average seeker for 'completely unified knowledge' is that the former has a fuller and clearer consciousness of the methods and conceptions he is using, and is less likely to apply them uncritically and in disregard of the subject matter to which he is applying them.

Mathematics was the only science that had outgrown the merest infancy among the Greeks. And in the Pythagoreans we have an example of philosophers who were completely carried away by the fascination of the conceptions of number and figure. In defining justice as 'a square number' the Pythagoreans were for the first time attempting to make ethics 'scientific', i.e. to lift reflection on human conduct out of the region of proverbial moralizing by applying to it the most scientific categories of which they knew. Plato has puzzled many generations of commentators by those mystic numbers which he introduces into his philosophy; in all likelihood he only half believed in them (if so much as that), and he seems to be playing an elaborate and rather cruel joke on literal-minded persons, hinting all the while at the inadequacy of the Pythagorean symbols. Aristotle introduced mathematical formulas into ethics, but only with carefully expressed modifications. His conception of scientific method comes, indeed, too exclusively from mathematics; but he is in advance

of many modern moralists in seeing that human conduct at least is too complex to be studied by mathematical methods.

It might be objected that in medieval philosophy the principle I have laid down did not hold, but that the reverse was the case, that philosophy was not affected by the sciences, but the sciences were 'corrupted by metaphysics'. The study of nature, however, was by no means that on which the medieval intellect exercised itself. There were in truth only two 'sciences' in which the medieval mind took a living interest, viz. moral theology and law – that is to say, the application of a supposed divine code to the particular cases of human conduct and the application in the same way of a human code assumed to be of supreme excellence. Physics was only a tradition (of course I am speaking roughly of what is true 'on the whole'). The words of Aristotle or of Galen were accepted on authority. In these sciences, however, where authority is a matter of necessity, the utmost ingenuity of mind could be exercised in bringing general principles to bear on particular cases. Thus the abstract, deductive and argumentative method actually employed in the sciences of legal and moral casuistry reacted on the interpretation given to Aristotelian logic and on the general theory of method adopted. Aristotelian logic was itself based on the method of geometry. Add to this the medieval habit of bowing to the authority of the written word in every department of thought and life, and we can easily see the source of the medieval conception of system in philosophy.

In the seventeenth century the effect of geometrical method on Hobbes and on Spinoza is sufficiently conspicuous.¹ The conceptions of mechanical physics assert themselves throughout this, and still more in the following century, even where the philosopher, in the interests of literary form, is careful to eschew the appearance of science. John Stuart Mill's phrase, 'mental chemistry' (*Examination of Hamilton*, p. 357, ed. 5), suggests a new set of categories which raise the 'association' psychologists above the level of their predecessors who used the categories of mechanics. In the present age the most conspicuously advancing science is biology; and the categories of organism and evolution are freely transferred to philosophy with the great advantage of lifting it out of the more abstract conceptions of mathematics or mechanics, but too often with insufficient consciousness of what is being done, so that striking metaphors are mistaken for indisputable facts or laws.

Now, there were 'evolutionists' before Darwin, and even before Mr Herbert Spencer, who seems to wish to take out a patent for the invention of the theory, and conspicuously calls the attention of a careless public to the fact that his essay on *Progress: its Law and Cause* appeared in April 1857, whereas *The Origin of Species* did not see the light till October 1859 (see Preface to 4th edition of *First Principles*). Evolution is in everyone's mouth now, and the writings of Mr Spencer have done a

great deal (along with the discoveries of Darwin) to make the conception familiar. But nothing grows up quite suddenly. During the latter half of last century many isolated thinkers had in this or that department of science come to apply the idea of development. Though in Kant as a philosopher the idea of evolution, and indeed the whole conception of historical growth, is conspicuously absent,² yet the same Kant as a man of science, was the author of a nebular hypothesis. Vico and Montesquieu had, still earlier, suggested a way of looking at human institutions which was not fully understood till several generations had passed. Above all, in biology Erasmus Darwin (*Zoonomia*, 1794) foreshadowed the work of his grandson. Buffon, Geoffrey St Hilaire, Lamarck, had all attacked the orthodox dogma of immutable species; and perhaps Lord Monboddo should not be forgotten, for his speculations on the origin of man became widely familiar, since the very shallowest wits could raise a laugh about them. Goethe, who, as an old man of eighty-one, was more excited by the news of the dispute between Cuvier and St Hilaire than by the news of the July Revolution, had forty years before (1790) published his *Metamorphoses of Plants*. Thus Hegel grew up in an intellectual atmosphere in which the conception of evolution, and especially of biological evolution, was no inconsiderable element. For Goethe's general view of nature he had the greatest sympathy – so much so indeed as to lead him to defend Goethe's theory of colour against the Newtonian theory, a defence which has brought Hegel into much discredit with the modern scientific mind. What attracted Hegel in Goethe's view of nature (as Mr S. Alexander has well pointed out in *Mind* xi, p. 511) was that sense of unity or totality in nature which the poet's feeling grasps, but which is apt to escape the analysis of the scientific understanding (cf. *Naturphilosophie*, pp. 317, 318, 483): and it was perhaps worth while to remind the world that to regard light as *composed* of different colours is only a way of making the concrete facts of nature intelligible to ourselves. In the same spirit Hegel complains (p. 489) that the botanists of his time did not appreciate Goethe's *Metamorphoses of Plants*, and 'did not know what to make of it, just because what was represented therein was a totality (*eben weil ein Ganzes darin dargestellt wurde*)'. Goethe gets behind the difference which to the ordinary eye and mind splits up a plant into a combination of unlike parts (root, stem, branch, leaves, blossoms, fruit) and sees all these as the differentiations of an identical nature (*Grundwesen*).

In his *Zur Morphologie* (written in 1795, published in 1807) Goethe formulates the law that 'the *more imperfect* a being is the more do its individual parts *resemble each other*, and the more do these parts *resemble the whole*. The *more perfect* the being is the more *dissimilar are its parts*. In the former case the parts are more or less a repetition of the whole; in the latter case they are totally unlike the whole. The more the parts

resemble each other, the less subordination is there of one to the other. *Subordination of parts indicates high grade of organisation* (Lewes' *Life of Goethe*, p. 358). We are familiar with this in another form: 'the change from an indefinite incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity'. Goethe has anticipated Von Baer's law, enunciated in respect of embryology (1828), which forms the essential part of the formula Mr Spencer as a philosopher has applied to the whole universe.

Evolution was thus familiar to Hegel, both the theory and the word. Everywhere in Hegel we read about *Entwicklung*; but of *Evolution* he does not speak in so friendly a tone. 'The two forms in which the series of stages in nature have been apprehended are Evolution and Emanation' (*Naturphil.*, p. 34). By the first, he explains, is meant the process from the less perfect to the more perfect; by the second the process from the more perfect to the less perfect. Of the two he prefers the conception of Emanation, because it explains the lower from the point of view of the higher, whereas Evolution carries one back 'into the darkness of the past', and only gives us a series of stages following one another in time. 'The time-difference has no interest whatever for thought' (p. 33). This is undoubtedly a hard saying. The man who can prefer the oriental conception of Emanation to the modern scientific conception of Evolution might seem to be more fit to be expounded by the Theosophical Society than to be seriously considered by the contemporaries of Mr Herbert Spencer. 'We must interpret the more developed by the less developed,' says Mr Spencer (*Data of Ethics*, p. 7); and at least ninety-nine out of every hundred scientific students would cry 'Amen.' But is this what they are themselves doing? They tell us about the less developed organisms or societies (or whatever may be the subject of investigation), and then they go on to tell us about the more developed. But are they really interpreting the higher by the lower? Let us listen to another philosopher who approached philosophy from the side of biology. In his *Study of Psychology* G. H. Lewes writes as follows: 'Once recognising the necessity of observing the sentient activities of men and of animals, and of interpreting these by reference to their organic conditions, what more natural suggestion than that our study should begin with animals? The comparative simplicity of their organisms and their manifestations would seem to mark them as furnishing the safest prolegomena to Human Psychology. I have already stated (in the preface to *Problems of Life and Mind*) that in 1860 I was led to collect materials with this view, but that fuller consideration showed it to be impracticable. To show why it was impracticable will be an answer to my Russian critic, M. Wyruboff, who objects to my "sin against scientific method" in not proceeding from phenomena that are general and simple to those that are special and complex; I ought, he thinks, to have made the exposition of the simpler cerebral phenomena in animals precede that of the more complex phenomena in

man. This was my own opinion till experience proved its mistake. I found myself constantly thwarted by the fallacies of anthropomorphic interpretation. It was impossible, even approximately, to eliminate these before a clear outline of the specially human elements was secured' etc. (pp. 118, 119). Further on he says: 'It is clear that we should never rightly understand vital phenomena were we to begin our study of Life by contemplating its simplest manifestations in the animal series; we can only understand the *Amœba* and the Polype by a light reflected from the study of Man' (p. 122). What makes it seem possible for the scientific investigator 'to begin at the beginning' is the fact that he is not doing so. The student of the *Amoeba* happens to be, not an *Amoeba*, but a specimen of a highly developed vertebrate, and knows at least something about the differentiated organs and functions of his own body. Professor Freeman 'explains' the English constitution by quoting Tacitus about the Germans and by describing the *Landesgemeinden* of Uri and Appenzell, etc., etc.: but then we all know something about our present constitution. Even Professor Freeman, however much he may dislike 'Modern' History, cannot help living and thinking in a very modern period.

Now this I take to be the element of truth in Hegel's preference for Emanation over Evolution. We only understand a part of anything when we can look at it as the part of a whole, and we only understand the elementary stages when we know them as the elementary stages of something more highly developed. This is true in each special branch of knowledge, and it is true in the attempt to think the universe as a whole.

Hegel's 'development' (*Entwicklung*) is not a time-process, but a thought-process; yet Hegel's method of exposition is such that the thought-process is apt to be read as if were meant to be a time-process. To avoid misunderstanding him we must, as has been said, 'read Hegel backwards'. 'He presents everything synthetically,' says Professor Seth (*Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 90), 'though it must first have been got analytically by an ordinary process of reflection upon the facts which are the common property of every thinker.' There has been much innocent laughter over Hegel's absurdity in saying that Being is the same thing as Nothing, and that Being and Nothing between them produced Becoming. But, if we take the conception of 'Becoming' and analyse it, we find that it does imply both Being and Not-being. That which becomes is that which was not but now is. The Eleatics were puzzled by the conception of Motion, just because they were trying to think the whole of reality under the category of Being, and did not see that Not-being was involved as well. So, on the other hand, the Heracleiteans seemed to make everything slip away in a flux, because they took the category of Becoming as ultimate and did not recognize that it implied the category of Being. The beginning of Hegel's *Logic* is, among other things, a memorandum of Plato's solution of these old controversies.

So again, if we are told that Identity passes over into Difference, and that the two produce Likeness and Unlikeness (I am not attempting to follow the minutiae of Hegel's statement here), we shall see the point of this better by taking the concept of Likeness and asking what it implies – a question that is by no means superfluous, for English philosophy has tended to take the category of similarity as if it were ultimate. Thus J. S. Mill says, 'Likeness and unlikeness cannot be resolved into anything else' (*Logic*, i, p. 75). Hume, in his *Treatise of Human Nature*, resolves 'identity' into 'resemblance'. 'This propensity', he says, 'to bestow an identity on our resembling perceptions produces the fiction of a continued existence' (p. 209, edit. Selby-Bigge). In treating of the Laws of Association, Mr Spencer aims at reducing contiguity to similarity (*Principles of Psychology*, § 120, vol. i, p. 267). Mr Bosanquet has pointed out that 'Mr Spencer is more of an atomist than anyone else has ever been, for he says that the syllogism must have four terms, *i.e.*, the middle term is not identical in its two relations, but only similar' (*Essays and Addresses*, p. 167). Mr Bosanquet is working out the subject from the other side, attacking the delusion of English philosophers that identity necessarily excludes difference. It is because of their abstract conception of identity that some of them have been led on to the attempt of getting rid of identity altogether in psychology and logic.

If, then, we read Hegel backwards, we find that his logic and the whole of his philosophy consist in this perpetual 'criticism of categories', *i.e.*, in an analysis of the terms and concepts which ordinary thinking and the various special sciences use as current coin without testing their real value. But the results of this 'criticism of categories' Hegel arranges so as to present the appearance of a completed system; the self-development of thought from the simplest to the most complex stages; the less adequate conceptions showing their imperfections, and so by criticizing themselves, as it were, leading us on to the more adequate, fuller and 'truer' ways of thinking. This is Hegel's manner of satisfying the demand for 'completely unified knowledge'. But because of this method of exposition he is peculiarly liable to be misunderstood and misrepresented. The tendency to mistake a thought-process for a time-process arises from our desire to substitute the easier form of picture-thinking for the more difficult effort of grasping the separate elements in their totality. And it is a tendency which may mislead even philosophers themselves and still more their followers. Thus Aristotle carefully defines the logical term as that 'into which the proposition is resolved' (*εἰς ὃν διαλύεται ἡ πρότασις*). But when 'terms' come to be treated of as the first part of logic, then the temptation is to explain the proposition as arising out of a combination of terms. So, again, when the process of inference has been analysed into premises and conclusion, the premises come to be regarded as if they existed first in time, and as if the conclusion were afterwards tacked on to them – a

piece of picture-thinking which has exposed to unmerited attack the Aristotelian analysis of reasoning. So, too, because we can think of society as recognizing certain rights in its members, the individuals with their rights come to be pictured as existing prior to the formation of society, in an imaginary state of nature. To take an example from another region – Space is analysed into its three dimensions; then the geometrician, for method's sake, treats of two dimensions first and afterwards goes on to treat of three dimensions. And so some people fancy that you can go on to spaces of four, five or any number of dimensions; whereas there is, as a matter of fact, no 'going on' at all – Space of one or of two dimensions with which we are supposed to start is an abstraction from the only real space.

Why, it may be asked, did Hegel adopt this treacherous mode of exposition? Two reasons may be given. In the first place, he was influenced, as we have seen, by the Neoplatonic idea of Emanation; but there is this all-important difference between Hegel and the Neoplatonists, that he gets beyond the idea of differentiation as mere loss or evil, and sees in it a necessary step in the movement to a higher unity. Thus the idea of Emanation in his hands passes over into the idea of development from the abstract to the concrete. But, in the second place, this development or thought-process does show itself as a time-process. Hegel's remark in the *Naturphilosophie* (p. 33) must not be taken to mean anything more than that a *mere* after-one-another in time is of no philosophical or scientific interest; thus, for example, the scientific historian will not write mere annals. Annals are the materials for history, and are not yet history. Above all in the history of philosophy does the connection between the thought-process and the time-process come to the surface. The history of philosophy gave Hegel his clue to the logical development of the categories. The simpler and more abstract categories come first in time in the process by which the human consciousness becomes gradually aware of the conceptions underlying ordinary thought and language. In the history of philosophy we have a development from the simpler to the more complex, like that which evolutionists see in the physical universe. Professor Wallace has well compared Hegel's discovery of the self-development of thought by means of the clue given him in the history of philosophy to Darwin's discovery of the process of evolution in the organic world by the help of the clue given him by 'artificial selection'. 'Philosophy', says Professor Wallace, 'is to the general growth of intelligence what artificial breeding is to the variation of species under natural conditions' (*The Logic of Hegel*, Prolegomena, p. cx).

I should quite agree with Professor Seth (*Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 170) that Hegel's greatest strength lies just in his interpretation of history – i.e. of the process of human evolution in all its departments. But Professor Seth blames Hegel for transferring to the development in

time the thought-process described in the *Logic*, without any justification except the ambiguity in the word 'development' (p. 159). I have just tried to show that the history of philosophy itself is Hegel's justification for the transference; and I think that if he is to be blamed at all, it should rather be for stating the thought-process in the *Logic* so that it looks like a time-process.

I suppose the belief still prevails about Hegel that he is *a priori* metaphysician who spins theories out of his head regardless of facts. And this reproach is held to apply with special force to his Philosophy of Nature. What Hegel himself says is something very different. 'Not only must philosophy be in harmony with experience, but empirical natural science is the presupposition and condition of the rise and formation of the philosophical science of nature.' The sympathetic thinking of the philosopher must follow after and depend upon the results of the analytic process of scientific research. This being so, it must be remembered in respect of Hegel's Philosophy of Nature that much of the natural science which supplied him with his material and his problem is now out of date; so that his Philosophy of Nature cannot have the same interest and value for us as his Aesthetic, or his Philosophy of Religion, or his Philosophy of History, though even in these departments we occasionally feel that the philosopher is working with somewhat antiquated materials, and not always dealing with what have come to be *our* chief problems. Second, Hegel's warmest admirers must admit that Hegel has his prejudices – patriotic prejudices in the main. His sympathy with Goethe's conception of nature was, on the whole, a beneficial influence; but it helped to make him unappreciative of Newton. And, third, Hegel has less interest in nature than in the works of the human mind. He is undergoing the reaction against the deification of nature, as something higher and better than man. 'Vanini says that a straw is enough to reveal the being of God'; but, adds Hegel, 'any idea of the mind, the poorest of its fancies, the play of its most accidental moods, every word is a more excellent reason for recognising the being of God than any single natural object whatever' (*Naturphilosophie*, p. 29). Again, 'Even an arbitrary volition – nay, even a bad volition – is infinitely higher than the regular movements of the stars or than the innocence of the plants; for a wrong human volition is the error of a thinking spiritual being' (*ibid.*, p. 30.)³

Grant all this, it may be said, and what then is the use of bringing Hegel's name into connection with Darwin's? There might be some reason for considering his attitude to evolution as he saw it represented in the *Biologie* (1802–5) of Treviranus, and in the *Philosophie zoologique* (1809) of Lamarck, and some reason, perhaps, for blaming him for his want of appreciation of the first beginnings of the great scientific revolution of this century. I think, however, it is worth while to see whether we can get any help, not from details in Hegel, but from his general method and

spirit of philosophizing, in making the attempt to *think* nature and human society as they present themselves to us now in the light of Darwin's theory of natural selection. Of evolution Hegel had heard – somewhat impatiently, perhaps – but not of natural selection. But neither had Treviranus nor Lamarck; neither had Mr Herbert Spencer when he elaborated the groundwork of his system. Even in the fifth edition (1884) of *First Principles*, 'natural selection' is only allowed to appear in a footnote, which footnote is intended to minimize the importance of Darwin's discovery (p. 447). Now it is 'natural selection' which seems to me the really epoch-making scientific theory; it is this that has produced that 'change of categories' which, as Hegel says (*Naturphil.*, p. 19), is the essential thing in all revolutions, whether in the sciences or in human history. Evolution in the form in which Mr Spencer, for instance, formulates it is only a further carrying out of an idea which may be traced back to the Ionian hylicists; 'natural selection' introduces a quite new method of looking at nature, and it has the further advantage of being, not a metaphysical speculation, but an undeniable fact.

What, then, is the effect of the theory of natural selection on Hegel's philosophy? Hegel's method of philosophizing nature could adjust itself quite easily to the new scientific theory. The factors which Darwin assumes for his theory are – Variation, Heredity, Struggle for Existence. Now are not Heredity and Variation just particular forms of the categories of Identity and Difference, whose union and interaction produce the actually existing kinds of living beings, i.e. those determinate similarities and dissimilarities which constitute 'species'? But this result – definite, clearly marked kinds – comes about through struggle, i.e. through negation, the constant elimination of the less fit. Survival of the fittest, on Darwin's theory, comes about only through the negative process of destruction. In the stage of mere nature this negativity is mechanical and external. In the higher stage of consciousness (spirit) this negativity is self-determined, free – as I shall try to show later on.

This attempt at Hegelianizing natural selection may seem fanciful. We know that Hegel's formulas have been read into Shakespeare's plays and into various inconsistent types of religious creed: and people become suspicious of formulas so very elastic. I think, however, my interpretation is valid so far as it goes, though it would not count for much except for reasons I now go on to consider.

There is one matter on which I think that most admirers of Hegel, unless they be of the very straitest orthodoxy, would allow that his view of nature needs some correction. I mean his conception of 'the Contingent' (*das Zufällige*). That infinite variety which is sometimes praised as 'the freedom of nature', or even as 'the divinity of nature', Hegel regards as not the glory but the defect and impotency of nature (*Naturphil.*, p. 37; cf. the small *Logic*; *Werke*, vi, pp. 288, 290; Wallace's translation,

pp. 227, 228). Thought has in nature gone out of itself into its 'other' – its extreme opposite – irrationality. And that is why nature is like a wild Bacchantic god (*Naturphil.*, p. 24).

This conception of the 'contingency' and 'weakness' of nature is a survival in Hegel of the Platonic and Aristotelian conception of matter. In Plato's view the world in space and time must, just because it is in space and time, fall short of what its Artificer wished. So with Aristotle, 'Chance' is an objective cause working in *rerum natura*, not a name for our ignorance. Professor Seth seems to hold that nature is illogical or non-rational, but that Hegel falls into a 'most transparent fallacy' in saying that contingency is itself a category – a form of the Idea which 'has no less than other forms of the Idea its due office in the world of objects'. 'To say that a thing is contingent or accidental', argues Professor Seth, 'is to say in so many words, that we can give no rational account of why it is as it is, and not otherwise' (*Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 137). [See above, p. 34–R.S.]

In this criticism I think that Professor Seth has approved of the more defective part of Hegel's statement, and has condemned the part in which Hegel shows most insight. Darwin's theory of natural selection seems to me, while helping as all modern science does to correct the despair of giving a rational account of what appears to us merely accidental, at the same time completely to justify Hegel in regarding this seeming non-rationality of nature as itself a form of the rational. The theory of natural selection presupposes (it is sometimes even made an objection to it that it does so presuppose) a tendency to variation in nature. There must be this for natural selection to work upon. Thus the non-rationality (indefinite variability) has its reason – in a sense in which that was never recognized before. Of course this tendency to variation is of itself a fact to be explained; and biologists feel themselves obliged now to face problems that might have been put aside as insoluble by scientific men in the days before this new conception of natural selection revolutionized their science.

Professor Seth asks: 'What logical connection is there between the different qualities of things – between the smell of a rose, for example, and its shape; or between the taste of an orange and its colour?' [See above, p. 32–R.S.] This seems to me rather an unlucky question. We feel sure now that there must be some. The scent of flowers, the taste of fruits, their colours, shapes, etc. are not regarded now as 'accidental' results of a fortuitous concourse of atoms or as the mere fancy work of a capricious maker, but as connected in some way with the means through which the plant is reproduced, and the species aided in its competition with others by the insects which carry its pollen and the birds which carry its seeds. Thus, in some plants, successive adoption of self-fertilization and insect-fertilization can be read off from the complicated shape of the

corolla.⁴ I do not know whether the particular problems, suggested by Professor Seth, about the rose and the orange have been solved. But quite analogous problems have been, such as – Why do white flowers often give out their scent only by night?⁵ Cats and red clover might seem to have no more logical connection than Tenterden Steeple and Goodwin Sands; but Mr Darwin has shown how the flourishing of red clover depends on the flourishing of cats, who eat the field-mice, who eat the bumble bees, who fertilize the red clover.⁶

What distinguishes Darwin's theory from other theories of evolution is the kind of explanation it gives. Hegel complains, and I think justly, that merely to go back 'into the darkness of the past', or merely to say, 'first there was the simple and then the complex was evolved out of it', and so on, is not to *explain* nature; it is only to give a chronological table of events – real or imaginary. We want to know *Why*. To refer us back to the homogeneous and undifferentiated is to give 'the material cause' (τὸ ἐξ οὐ) of what has happened: it is not to explain why what has happened has happened. But the theory of natural selection does explain why. Such a form or characteristic has been of advantage, of utility to the species, and therefore has favoured its continuance. Darwin restores 'final causes' to their proper place in science – final causes in the Aristotelian, not in the Stoic or 'Bridgewater Treatise' sense.⁷

'The Good' as a means of explanation thus regains the importance which Plato claimed for it. He makes Socrates complain that Anaxagoras, after asserting that Reason was the cause or principle of all things, went on to assign only 'material' causes of things, whereas if we are to give a rational explanation we must do so by showing how the good was realized in the world (*Phaedo*, 97, 98). Plato was too hastily trying to see everything in the light of the one supreme good – the end of the universe as a whole. And Aristotle's caution was not unnecessary – 'the good for man is not the same as the good for fishes' (*Eth. Nic.*, vi, 7, § 4). This conception of final causes, which the theory of natural selection restores, is not the cruder form of teleology which attempts to explain everything in the universe by showing that it serves the good of man. Each species has come to be what it is by pursuing (if we may speak metaphorically) its own good. Each individual is preserved by its own good. In the conflict between individuals and between kinds that which is better equipped for the particular struggle is selected. From many points of view, for example, from ours – either as the species of human beings, or ours, as members of this or that society, or ours, as individuals – what happens may be very far from what we consider *our* good, yet it must be the better adapted for success which succeeds. This is a truism when stated thus: but from this it follows that the explanation of structures, habits etc. must be found in the end or purpose that they serve. This substitution of final cause for efficient or material cause as the more important category is

as significant for us now as it seemed to be to Aristotle. And of all modern philosophers Hegel has recognized most fully this significance of the conception of end. On this head even his critic, Professor Seth, allows that he represents 'what is profoundest and best in modern philosophy' (*Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 83).

Let me trace some consequences of the theory of natural selection in ethics – where the applications of it are perhaps the most interesting to us. In ethics the theory of natural selection has vindicated all that has proved most permanently valuable in utilitarianism, while correcting those parts of the theory which made the negative work of the intuitionist critic very easy. Right and wrong appear now as what help or hinder the good of the society – whatever the society may be. The happiness of the individual, as Professor Clifford pointed out (*Lectures and Essays*, ii, p. 173), is of no use to the community, except in so far as it makes him a more efficient citizen. Thus ethics is again, to Aristotle and to Hegel, closely bound up with politics. The ethical end for the individual must be a social end – a common good (whatever the community may be).

Natural selection (as I have tried to show more fully elsewhere⁸) is a perfectly adequate cause to account for the rise of morality – in that same sense of 'cause' in which we use the term in scientific explanations of natural phenomena. Regarded as events in time, the appearance of consciousness and the capacity for language with the consequent possibility of storing up the results of experience may be accounted for by natural selection, i.e. they favoured in the struggle for existence those species which happened to possess them. The facts of consciousness, of reflection, of self-consciousness, however, make an enormous difference in the character of this struggle. Natural selection in its lower stages – those with which the naturalist is familiar – works solely by the destruction of the less favourably circumstanced organisms and species. Natural selection among 'articulate-speaking', thinking mortals, who can 'look before and after', works in other ways as well. Morality, to begin with, means those feelings and acts and habits which are advantageous to the welfare of the community. Morality comes to mean the conscious and deliberate adoption of those feelings and acts and habits which are advantageous to the welfare of the community; and reflection makes it possible to alter the conception of what the community is, whose welfare is to be considered. In human history, except where there has been retrogression, we find an advance in the ideals of life, i.e. man has been coming to a fuller and fuller consciousness of the end or good at which from the first, merely as a social animal, he had been blindly striving. It is worth while referring to retrogressions, because such cases show us to what an extent morality and all other differences between man and the animals, between the highest and the lowest races of human beings, are due to the influence of social institutions and not to any original, innate or inherited instincts.

Long centuries of civilization do not prevent mankind from reverting to a condition not far from that of the lowest races, where circumstances, such as a terrible pestilence, long-continued warfare, a barbarian invasion or life among savages have removed the ordinary restraints of civilization. Still these are exceptional conditions. What may appear to be a general breakdown and return to barbarism may be the transition to a new and, in some respects, higher type of social organization. For in human evolution we are forcibly reminded that progress does not go on in a straight line; but, just because thought enters into the process, at each step there is an attempt to correct the one-sidedness of the preceding stage. In the history of philosophy this 'dialectic movement' comes clearly to the surface. The philosopher who is not a mere echo of what has become a dogmatic system is driven, by reflection on the prevalent manner of thinking, to lay stress on the aspects of truth which have been neglected. But the criticism he applies to his predecessors must in due time be applied to him. The great constructive philosophers seem indeed to gather up into their thought all the elements that existed scattered in preceding systems; but the time comes when a new criticism and then a new reconstruction are needed, if philosophy is to remain living and not to be fossilized in a traditional dogma. 'Let us follow whithersoever the argument leads us'; and, if we do not let ourselves become 'misologists', we must hold fast to this Athenian faith in the value of the perpetual conflict of ideas, which is the highest form of the struggle for existence. But what comes out clearly, and with some consciousness on the part of those concerned in the history of philosophy is also going on in all other parts of human evolution. If natural selection operated among human beings exactly as in the lower organic world, there would be no advance except by the destruction of all the individuals composing an unsuccessful form of social organism. In the lower stages of human history that must have happened often enough. In the higher stages the organism may change without the members of it being destroyed; the race (the merely *natural* element) is not inseparably linked to the fate of all its institutions, its language, religion, form of government etc. A vigorous race may live through many political and social institutions; on the other hand, successful institutions may become the possession of many races. Now in the history of civilization generally we can see, though not in every respect so clearly as in the history of philosophy, this criticism of customs and ideas going on. Revolutions, peaceable or otherwise, are the transitions from one stage to another, provoking generally a counter-revolution, but in progressive societies, helping the forward movement through whatever apparently zigzag courses. Mr Herbert Spencer thinks that the movement of human progress is all in one direction – from status to contract. Any attempts to get rid of some of the anarchy of individualism he can only interpret as a return to militancy. A follower of Hegel would agree with

the average man that it is no such thing. We are not returning to the Middle Ages, but advancing to a new stage which shall reconcile both elements. Of course this new stage will not be final – though we are always apt to look on the stage just ahead of us as if it were final, because it is what to us seems most needed. Defects, one-sidedness in it, will show themselves and need correction, perhaps at first by opposite exaggerations. The correction may take place more and more through peaceful debate, instead of through fighting. A still higher stage would be reached when people themselves made the correction instead of leaving it to a rival party to do so: the dialectic movement may go on within the soul.

This seems to me a type of interpretation of human evolution which is in entire accordance with Darwin's theory of natural selection, and which yet admits of what is most valuable in Hegel's dialectic method. The analysis of the conception of punishment in Mr Alexander's *Moral Order and Progress* (pp. 327–33) seems to me a most admirable example of such a reconciliation of Darwinian and Hegelian evolution. 'Punishment in man', says Mr Alexander, 'corresponds to the struggle of the dominant variety with other varieties . . . We punish in order to extirpate ideals which offend the dominant or general ideal. But in nature, conflict means the extinction of individual animals; in punishment it is sufficient that the false ideal is extinguished, and it is not necessary always that the person himself should be destroyed.'

Punishment, as Mr Alexander puts it in summing up, has three characters: 'It is retributive in so far as it falls under the general law that resistance to the dominant type recoils upon the resistant or guilty creature: it is preventive in so far as, being a statutory enactment, it aims at securing the maintenance of the law irrespective of the individual's character. But this latter characteristic is secondary, and the former is comprehended under the third idea, that of reformation, which is the superior form under which retribution appears when the type is a mental ideal and is effected by conscious persons.' This account of punishment is Darwinian in its application of the concept of natural selection. It is Hegelian in its recognition of the diverse elements that enter into the idea of punishment, unlike the rival one-sided theories on the subject; and it is Hegelian above all in its recognition that what seem the extreme opposite theories of retribution and reformation are, after all, different stages of the same concept.

Hegel's treatment of ethical questions agrees with that of the evolutionists in two main respects – both of which have been made grounds of objection to his philosophy. (1) The complete separation which Kantian ethics and the ethics of the intuitionist school make between 'ought' and 'is' tends to disappear. Hegel protests vigorously against the philosophical weakness of Fichte's perpetual *Sollen*, and seems to take up an almost 'Philistine' attitude towards the enthusiasm of the romantic dreamer or

of the reformer indignant with the abuses of society. Similarly we know that a very general consequence of the evolutionary and historical view of society has been to aid the reaction against the revolutionary appeal to 'natural rights', and to support a political and social conservatism of the type so brilliantly illustrated in this country by Burke. And in ethics the evolutionary moralists tend to do away with the distinction between moral laws and laws of nature, to treat moral action as not distinct in kind from action in general. (2) Hegel's ethics are a part of his 'Philosophy of Law'; the familiar separations between politics and ethics, between society and the individual, appear only as aspects of what cannot properly be thought of apart from each other. So, too, ethics to the evolutionist is a branch of sociology. And to both Hegel and the evolutionist the reproach is sometimes made that they ignore the significance of personality.

Now, first, as to Hegel's too passive acquiescence in fact, let me admit, once for all, that that is the great flaw in his practical philosophy. All wisdom seemed to culminate in Hegel's *Encyclopaedia*, all history in the Prussian bureaucracy of 1820; and Hegel's orthodox disciples were ready to weep that there remained no more realms for the world-spirit to conquer. But this 'finality' is an inconsistency in Hegel's application of his philosophy. The same dialectic movement which had brought the human spirit to the stage at which Hegel found it and interpreted it must urge it onwards. Yet Hegel's error is only the exaggeration of his perfectly sound feeling that the philosopher as such has only to do with what has already come into existence – the same sound feeling which, as I have already shown, makes him insist that the philosophy of nature must follow and cannot anticipate the course of the physical sciences. Hegel's famous dictum 'The Real is the Rational' has been a stumbling-block to many, in spite of what he himself says in explanation of it (in the Introduction to the *Encyclopaedia*). Mere existence is a very different thing from reality. Professor Seth (*Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 203) treats this distinction as a 'quibble' on Hegel's part. Surely it is a perfectly legitimate use of that fatally ambiguous word 'real'. The use of 'real' in antithesis to 'sham' is common enough; and, as a matter of fact, it is more of a quibble when those who boast themselves 'Realists' in philosophy take advantage of this popular *moral* connotation of the term 'real' to claim support for themselves in their polemic against Idealism, when, for example, they tell us that an atom is something more real than a thought. This is true in the sense that the atom must be thought of as being in space; but the ordinary mind takes it as if it meant that the atom is more important. That 'the real is the rational' is a doctrine which is implied in, and may be well illustrated by, the theory of natural selection. All sorts of variations occur, i.e. they exist; but only those that prove to be of some value persist. Whatever maintains itself must do so because of

some rationality that it has or had. When the rationality ceases, we have an appearance and not a reality, a sham that is doomed to perish. This, as we know, is the one lesson that Carlyle read in history.

Hegel's temperament and his circumstances led him to lay less stress on the converse of his proposition: 'The Rational is the Real'. It does not matter how few hold an opinion now: if their opinion is what makes for the greater well-being of society, they have got 'the root of the matter' in them, and their opinion will ultimately prevail. The Idea, as Hegel himself would say, cannot remain a mere 'ought to be'; it must make itself real. It may take a long time; but time is indifferent to it. Similarly, the evolutionist is apt to decry all attempts to better the world. He knows that all institutions, practices etc. that have established themselves must have done so because of some value they had (some rationality); but, occupied as he is in studying past and existing forms, he is apt not to see the promise in new variations. Of course of these new variations, (i.e. new ideals, new projects etc.) a great many will fail. Even a man of inventive genius may make a lot of 'unreal' inventions. It needs a sort of prophetic intuition to see what makes for welfare in the future. But on the principle of natural selection, whatever institution or type of conduct ceases to serve the well-being of society is doomed to perish by the working of those same forces of struggle which at one time gave it reality and predominance. Whether it perishes, dragging with it the happiness and the lives of human beings or not, will depend on whether it perishes by the mere natural struggle, or is peaceably set aside by the conscious act of the reformer anticipating on behalf of his society and obviating the cruel process of mere natural selection.

Hegel's philosophic endeavour to see the rationality of all established institutions has sometimes been condemned as an unreasoning optimism. But we have seen that he does *not* mean that 'Whatever is, is right.' And his optimism is no more than that faith in the ultimate rationality of the universe which is the presupposition (however unexpressed or unrecognized) of all scientific interpretation and of all practical effort.

To come to the second great objection made to Hegel – Professor Seth complains (and with widespread sympathy) that in Hegel's system there 'is room only for one Self-consciousness: finite selves are wiped out, and nature, deprived of any life of its own, becomes, as it were, the still mirror in which the one Self-consciousness contemplates itself' (*Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 162). The individual is supposed to be a fatal objection to Hegel's system: he will get in the way of it and throw it off the rails. But, perhaps, we may recall George Stephenson's answer to the objection about the cow getting in the way of the steam-engine: 'It would be very awkward for the cow.' And this conception of the abstract individual – the favourite *idolon* of popular philosophy – is destroyed by the logic of idealism, whether in the region of metaphysics or of ethics. Of course

each of us, if we had been making the universe, might have made his own individual self the centre of it; but logic teaches us that we cannot think the universe rightly from our individual point of view, and life teaches us that we must not live it from our individual point of view. If we try to do so, to any very great extent, our neighbours may be obliged to shut us up in an asylum or to hang us, in the interest of something that is greater than the individual self. And so we find that the *real* individual is not the individual in isolation from and in distinction from all other individuals, but is a synthesis of the universal and particular self.

The scientific study of nature shows us that not only is nature 'careless of the single life', but even the type or species is transitory, that the infinite diversity of kinds and individuals does not exclude the essential unity of nature. And thus the modern man of science, if he takes to philosophy, is generally able to appreciate Spinoza. Hegel, however, has risen above the category of substance. Self-consciousness is to him the highest category, and, as Professor Seth admits (p. 89), is 'our best key to the ultimate nature of existence as a whole'. But what is this 'self-consciousness'? Is it God, or is it the individual self, or is it a mere abstract universal? Is the critic, who asks these questions, quite sure what he means by 'God', and by 'the individual self', and that what he means by these terms represents an intelligible reality, and not merely the picture-thinking of ordinary beliefs? Is it not, at least, a hypothesis worth taking account of that in our consciousness of self we have the clearest manifestation of the unity which science presupposes in the universe? Hegel admits – in perfect accord with the most materialistic science – that spirit comes *from* nature; nature is the potentiality of spirit. But, if we take this conception of potentiality quite seriously, will it not be nearer the whole truth to say, with Hegel, that spirit, being out of itself, estranged from itself in nature, comes to itself in human consciousness? The separateness and isolation of one self-conscious being from another is only a necessary consequence of the manifestation of spirit in space and time. It is the negativity which makes the manifestation possible. But the 'truth' of our separate selfhoods is only to be found in our ultimate unity, which religion calls 'God', which ethics calls 'goodness' – a unity which is not the abstract 'One' of the Neoplatonist, but an organic unity realized in a society which is not a mere aggregate of individuals, but a spiritual body animated by that love which is the highest religious conception of deity.

Let me recall what I said before about the concept of 'final cause', or 'the good'. Might not a philosophical theology substitute this concept for that of 'first cause'? I shall not inquire how far the consequences might be favourable to orthodoxy (of any particular species) or not; but at least such a theology would be more in accordance with a truly ethical religion.

Hegel's critics are puzzled by what seems the union of mystical theology with 'the crudest materialism'. Regard his system in its general outlines (I am not thinking of details or applications) as a great speculative hypothesis – is it not a strong argument in favour of this hypothesis that it can at the same time accept without reserve the results of scientific discovery, however materialistic they may seem, and can yet explain, and to some extent justify, the speculations of those great religious thinkers who have attempted sincerely, but perhaps too boldly, to grasp in their thought of God the whole secret of the Universe? If we may judge by past experience, all attempts on the part of 'intuitionists' to meet evolutionists on questions of 'origins' are doomed to failure: one untenable position has to be surrendered after another. The idealist makes no such attempt. He only insists that, after we have had as complete a history as can be given of how things have come to be what they are, we are justified in looking back from our vantage ground and seeing in the past evolution the gradual 'unrolling' of the meaning that we only fully understand at the end of the process. The process is not completed; and therefore this attempt has to be renewed for each generation. But at every stage it is in the highest that we know that we must seek the key to the philosophical interpretation of nature and of man.

Notes

1. With regard to Hobbes, compare Aubrey's story, quoted by Professor G. Croom Robertson, *Hobbes*, p. 31: 'He was forty years old before he looked on geometry, which happened accidentally: being in a gentleman's library in —, Euclid's *Elements* lay open, and it was the 47th Prop., Lib 1. So he reads the proposition. "By G—," says he, "this is impossible!" So he reads the demonstration, which referred him back to another, which he also read, *et sic deinceps*, that at last he was demonstratively convinced of that truth. This made him in love with geometry.'

2. Of course such a statement is only relatively true – i.e. if we compare Kant with Hegel and other philosophers of this century. Kant does maintain the idea of *progress* in human society, and explains it as due to the 'unsocial sociability of men' – by which he clearly means 'repulsion' and 'attraction' (concepts borrowed from physics). He is quite aware that the 'original contract' never took place as a matter of fact in history, but he prefers to think out problems of politics with the help of these unhistorical fictions. Here, as everywhere, the abstract line which Kant draws between what is *a priori* and what is *a posteriori* – between the form of thought and the matter of experience – prevents him from seeing a thought-process in the time-process.

3. Cf. the passage near the beginning of the Introduction of the *Aesthetic*: 'If we look at it *formally* – i.e., only considering in what way it exists, not what there is in it – even a silly fancy such as may pass through a man's head is *higher* than any product of Nature; for such a fancy must at least be characterised by intellectual being and by freedom' (Bosanquet's translation, p. 3).

4. Cf. A. R. Wallace, *Darwinism*, p. 331.

5. *ibid.*, p. 316. 'White flowers are often fertilised by moths, and very frequently give out their scent only by night.'
6. Darwin, *Origin of Species*, pp. 57, 58.
7. Cf. Hegel's small *Logic*, *Werke* vi, pp. 378, 379; Wallace's translation, p. 299.
8. Art. on 'Natural selection and the spiritual world', in *Westminster Review*, May, 1890, reprinted in 2nd ed of *Darwinism and Politics* (1891). See esp. pp. 96–106.

The changes of method in Hegel's dialectic (1892)

J. Ellis McTaggart

My object in this essay will be to show that the method by which Hegel proceeds from one category to another in his *Logic* is not the same throughout, but is materially different in the later categories from the form to be found in the earlier stages. I shall endeavour to show that these changes can be reduced to a general law, and that from this law we may derive important consequences with regard to the general nature and validity of the dialectic.

The exact relations of these corollaries to Hegel's own views is rather uncertain. Some of them do not appear to be denied in any part of the *Logic*, and, since they are apparently involved in some of his theories, may be supposed to have been recognized and accepted by him. On the other hand, he did not explicitly state and develop them anywhere, which, in the case of doctrines of such importance, is some reason for supposing that he did not hold them. Others, again, are certainly incompatible with his express statements. I desire, therefore, in considering them to leave on one side the question of how far they were believed by Hegel, and merely to give reasons for thinking that they are necessary consequences of his system, and must be accepted by those who hold it.

The passage in which Hegel sums up his position on this point most plainly is to be found in the *Smaller Logic*, section 240, and runs as follows: 'The abstract form of the continuation or advance is, in Being, another (or antithesis) and transition into another; in the Essence, showing or reflexion in its opposite; in the Notion, the distinction of the individual from the universality, which continues itself as such into, and forms an identity with, what is distinguished from it.'

The difference between the procedure of Being and that of Essence is given in more detail in section 3, lecture note. 'In the Sphere of Essence one category does not pass into another, but refers to another merely. In Being the form of reference or connexion is purely a matter of our

own reflexion: but it is the special and proper characteristic of Essence. In the Sphere of Being, when somewhat becomes another, the somewhat has vanished. Not so in Essence: here there is no real other, but only diversity, the reference of one category to its antithesis. The transition of Essence is therefore at the same time no transition; for in the passage of different into different, the different does not vanish: the different terms remain in their connexion. When we speak of Being and Nought, Being is independent, so is Nought. The case is otherwise with the Positive and the Negative. No doubt these possess the characteristics of Being and Nought. But the positive by itself has no sense; its whole being is in reference to the negative. It is the same with the negative. In the Sphere of Being the reference of one term to the other is only implicit; in Essence, on the contrary, it is explicitly stated. And this in general is the distinction between the forms of Being and Essence: in Being everything is immediate, in Essence everything is relative.'

And again, in describing the transition from Essence to the Notion, he says (*Enc*, section 161, lecture note): 'Transition into something else is the dialectical process within the range of Being; reflexion (bringing something else into light) in the range of Essence. The movement of the Notion is development; by which that only is explicitly affirmed which is already naturally and properly speaking present. In the world of nature, it is organic life that corresponds to the grade of the notion. Thus, for example, the plant is developed from its seed. The seed virtually involves the whole plant, but does so only ideally or in thought; and it would therefore be a mistake to regard the development of the root, stem leaves, and other different parts of the plant as meaning that they were realiter present, but in a minute form, in the germ. That is the so-called "box-within-box" hypothesis; a theory which commits the mistake of supposing an actual existence of what is at first found only in the shape of an ideal. The truth of the hypothesis on the other hand lies in its perceiving that, in the process of development, the Notion keeps to itself, and only gives rise to alteration of form without making any addition in point of content. It is this nature of the Notion – this manifestation of itself in its process as a development of its own self – which is the point noted by those who speak of innate ideas in men, or who, like Plato, describe knowledge merely as reminiscence. Of course that again does not mean that everything which is embodied in a mind, after that mind has been formed by instruction, had been present to it beforehand in a definitely expanded shape.

'The movement of the Notion is after all, a sort of illusion. The antithesis which it lays down is no real antithesis. Or, as it is expressed in the teaching of Christianity, not merely has God created a world which forms a kind of antithesis to Him; He has also from all Eternity begotten a Son, in whom He, a spirit, is at home with Himself.'

2. [No number 1. in original.] The result of this process may be summed up as follows: The further the dialectic goes from its starting point the less prominent becomes the apparent stability of the individual finite categories, and the less do they seem to be self-centred and independent. On the other hand, the process itself becomes more evident and obvious, and is seen to be the only real meaning of the lower categories. In Being each category appears, taken by itself, to be permanent and exclusive of all others, and to have no principle of transition in it. It is only outside reflection which examines and breaks down this pretence of stability, and shows us that the dialectic process is inevitable. In Essence, however, each category by its own import refers to that which follows it, and the transition is seen to be inherent in its nature. But it is still felt to be, as it were, only an external effect of that nature. The categories have still an inner nature, as compared with the outer relations which they have with other categories. So far as they have this inner nature, they are still conceived as independent and self-centred. But with the passage into the Notion things alter; that passage 'is the very hardest, because it proposes that independent actuality shall be thought as having all its substantiality in the passage, and in the identity with the independent actuality confronting it' (*Enc.*, section 159). Not only is the transition now necessary to the categories, but the transition *is* the categories. The reality in any finite category consists only in its summing up those which went before, and in leading on to those which come after.

Correlative with this change, and connected with it, is another. In the categories of Being the typical form is a transition from a thesis to an antithesis which is merely complementary to it, and is in no way superior to it in value or comprehensiveness. Only when these two extremes are taken together is there for the first time any advance to a higher Notion. This advance is a transition to a synthesis which comes as a consequence of the thesis and antithesis jointly. It would be impossible to obtain the synthesis, or to make any advance from either of the two complementary terms without the other. Neither is in any respect more advanced than the other, and neither of them can be said to be more closely connected with the term in which both of them alike find their explanation and reconciliation. But when we come to Essence the matter is changed. Here the transition from thesis to antithesis is still indeed from positive to negative, but it is more than merely this. The antithesis is not merely complementary to the thesis, but is a correction of it. It is consequently more concrete and true than the thesis and represents a real advance. And the transition to the synthesis is not made so much from the comparison of the two previous terms, as from the antithesis alone. For the antithesis has not merely the contrary defect to the thesis, but it has to some extent corrected the mistake, and therefore has – to use the Hegelian phraseology – 'the truth' of the thesis more or less within itself. As the

action of the synthesis is to reconcile the thesis and the antithesis, it can only be deduced from the comparison of the two. But if the antithesis has – as it has in Essence – the thesis as part of its own significance, it will present the whole of the data which the synthesis requires, and it will not be necessary to recur to the thesis before the step to the synthesis is taken.

But although the reconciliation can be inferred from one term of the pair without the other, a reconciliation is still necessary. For, although the antithesis is an advance upon the thesis, it is also opposed to it. It is not simply a completion of it, but also a denial, though a denial which is already an approximation to a union. This element of opposition and negation tends to disappear in the categories of the Notion. Here the steps are indeed discriminated from one another, but they can scarcely be said to be in opposition. For we have now arrived at a consciousness more or less explicit that in each category all that have gone before are summed up, and all that are to come after are contained implicitly. 'The movement of the Notion is after all a kind of illusion. The antithesis which it lays down is no real antithesis.' And, as a consequence, the synthesis merely completes the antithesis, without correcting one-sidedness in it, in the same way as the antithesis merely expands and completes the thesis. As this type is realized, in fact, the distinctions of the three terms gradually lose their meaning. There is no longer an opposition produced between two terms and mediated by a third. Each term is a direct advance on the one before it. The object of the process is not now to make the one-sided complete, but the implicit explicit. For we have reached a stage when each side carries in it already more or less consciousness of that unity of the whole which is the synthesis, and requires development rather than refutation.

That these changes should accompany the one previously mentioned is natural. For, as it is gradually seen that each category, of its own nature, and not by mere outside reflection on it, leads on to the next, that next will have inherent in it its relation to the first. It will not only be the negation of the first, but it will know itself to be such. It will not only be the complement of the thesis, but it will be aware that it is a complement and will know what it is that it completes. In so far as it does this, it will be higher than the thesis. For, although each category will see that it is essential to it that it should be connected with the other, this can do nothing in the thesis but give a general character of transitoriness to it, for it only knows that it is connected with something, but does not yet know with what. But the antithesis knows with what it is connected, for we have already passed through the thesis before we can reach it, and it is through the thesis that we have come to it. And to know that it is inseparably connected with its opposite, and defined by its relation to it, is an important step towards the reconciliation of the opposition.

A fortiori the greater clearness and ease of the transition will have this effect in the case of the Notion. For there we see that the whole meaning of the category lies in its passage to another. The second, therefore, has the whole meaning of the first in it, as well as the addition that has been made, and must therefore be higher than the first.

From this follows the different relation to the synthesis. For the result of the more or less complete inclusion of the thesis in the meaning of the antithesis is, as we have seen, the possibility of finding all the data required for the synthesis in the antithesis alone, while the completely successful absorption of each term in its successor tends to obliterate the triple distinction altogether, in which case each term would be a simple advance on the one below it, and would be deduced from that one only.

While Hegel expressly notices, as we have seen, the increasing freedom and directness of the dialectic movement, he makes no mention of the different relation to one another assumed by the various members of the process, which I have just indicated. Traces of the change may, however, be observed in the detail of the dialectic. The three most significant triads to examine for this purpose will be the first in the division of Being, the middle one in the division of Essence, and the last one in the division of the Notion. For, if there is any change within each of these three great divisions (a point we must presently consider), the special characteristics of each division will be shown most clearly at that point in which it is at the greatest distance from each of the other divisions. The triads in question are those of Being, Not-Being and Becoming; of the World of Appearance, Content and Form, and Ratio; and of Life, Cognition and the Absolute Idea.

Now, in the first of these, thesis and antithesis are on an absolute level. Not-Being is no higher than Being: it does not contain Being in any sense in which Being does not contain it; it is as easy to pass from Not-Being to Being as *vice versa*. And Not-Being by itself is helpless to produce Becoming – as helpless as Being is. The synthesis can only come from the conjunction of both of them. On the other hand, the idea of Content and Form, according to Hegel, is a distinct advance on the idea of the World of Appearance, since in it 'the connexion of the phenomenon with self is completely stated'. Ratio, again, although the synthesis of the two previous terms, is deduced from the second of them alone, while it could not be deduced from the first. It is the relation of form and content to one another which leads us on to the other relation which is called Ratio (*Enc.*, section 134). And, again, the idea of Cognition is a distinct advance upon the idea of Life, since the defect in the latter from which Hegel explains the existence of death is overcome as we pass to cognition. And it is from Cognition alone, without any reference back to Life, that we reach to the Absolute Idea, which is derived from the consideration of the perfect form of Cognition proper and of the perfect form of

Volition – which latter also forms part of the antithesis, under the general name of Cognition.

3. Another point arises, on which we shall find but little guidance in Hegel's own writings. To each of the three great divisions of the dialectic he has ascribed a peculiar variation of the method. Are we to understand that one variety changes into another suddenly at the transition from division to division, or is the change continuous, so that, while the typical forms of each division are strongly characterized, the difference between the last step in one and the first step in the next is no greater than the difference between two consecutive steps in the same division? Shall we find the best analogy in the distinction between water and steam – a qualitative difference suddenly brought about when a quantitative change has reached a certain point, or in the distinction between youth and manhood, which at their most characteristic points are clearly distinct, but which pass into one another imperceptibly?

On this point Hegel says nothing. Possibly it had never presented itself to his mind. But it seems to me that traces may be observed throughout his *Logic* which may lead us to believe that the change of method is gradual and continuous.

In the first place, we may notice that the absolutely pure type of the process in Being occurs in the first triad only. Being and Not-Being are on a level. But if we compare Being *an sich* with Being for another, the One with the Many, mere Quantity with Quantum, the Infinite Quantitative Progression with the Quantitative Relation, and the Rule with the Measureless, we observe that the second category is higher than the first in each pair, and that it is not merely the complement of the first, but to a certain degree transcends it. And the inherent relation of thesis to antithesis seems to develop more as we pass on, so that before Essence is reached its characteristics are already to some measure visible, and the mere passivity and finitude of Being itself is broken down.

If, again, we compare the first and last stages of Essence, we shall find that the first approximates to the type of Being, while the last comes fairly close to that of the Notion, by substituting the idea of development for that of the reconciliation of contradictions. Difference, as treated by Hegel, is certainly an advance on Identity, and not a mere opposite, but there is still a good deal of opposition between the terms. The advance is shown by the fact that Difference contains Likeness and Unlikeness within itself (*Enc.*, section 117), while the opposition of the two categories is clear, not only in common usage, but from the fact that the synthesis has to reconcile them, and balance their various deficiencies. But when we reach Substance and Causality we find that the notion of contradiction has almost vanished, and that the notion of development has taken its place nearly as completely as could happen if we were already in the sphere of the Notion.

So, finally, the special features of the dialectic in the Notion are not fully exhibited till we come to its last stage. In the transition from the Notion as Notion to the Judgment, and from the Judgment to the Syllogism, we have not entirely rid ourselves of the elements of opposition and negation. It is not till we reach the concluding triad of the Logic that we are able fully to see the typical progress of the Notion. In the transition from Life to Cognition, and from Cognition to the Absolute Idea, we perceive that the movement is all but completely direct, that the whole is seen as in each part, and that there is no longer a contest, but only a development.

4. Much weight, however, cannot be placed on all this, partly because of the extreme difficulty of comparing, quantitatively and exactly, shades of difference so slight and subtle, and partly because Hegel nowhere explicitly mentions any continuous process, and there is therefore some ground for supposing that the continuity, if it existed, had escaped his notice. But the fact that some traces of such a continuous development are found in his logic may be some additional support, if we are able to conclude that such a development would, in a correct dialectic, be continuous.

Before we consider this question we must first inquire whether the existence of such a development of method of any sort, whether continuous or not, might be expected from the nature of the case. We shall see that there are reasons for supposing this to be so when we remember what we must regard as the essence of the dialectic. The motive power of the whole process is the concrete absolute truth, from which all finite categories are mere abstractions, and to which they spontaneously tend to return. Again, two contradictory ideas cannot be held true at the same time. If it ever seems inevitable that they should be, this is a sign of error somewhere, and we cannot feel satisfied with the result, until we have transcended and synthesized the contradiction. It follows that in so far as the finite categories announce themselves as permanent, and as opposed in pairs of unsynthesized contradictories, they are expressing falsehood and not truth. We gain the truth by transcending the contradictions of the categories and by demonstrating their instability. Now the change in the method of which we are speaking indicates a clearer perception of the truth. For we have seen that it becomes more spontaneous, and more direct. As it becomes more spontaneous, as each category is seen to lead on of its own nature to the next, and to have its meaning only in the transition, it brings out more fully what lies at the root of the whole dialectic – that truth, namely, lies only in the synthesis. And as the process becomes more direct and leaves the opposition and negation behind, it also brings out more clearly what is an essential fact in every stage of the dialectic – that is that the impulse of our imperfect truth is not towards self-denial as such, but towards self-completion. The

essential nature of the whole dialectic is thus more clearly seen in the later stages, which approximate to the type of the Notion, than in the earlier stages, which approximate to the type of Being.

This is what we might expect *a priori*. For the content of each stage in the dialectic is nearer to the truth than that of the stage before it. And each stage forms the starting point and the premise from which we go forward again to further truth. And, therefore, as at each step in the forward process we have a fuller knowledge of the truth than at the last, it is only natural that that fuller knowledge should react upon the manner in which the step is made. The dialectic is due to the relation between the concrete whole, implicit in consciousness, and the abstract part, explicit in consciousness. Since the second element alters at each step, as the categories approximate to the complete truth, it is clear that the relation between it and the unchanging whole alters also, and this must affect the process. Just as the velocity of a falling body increases, because (among other reasons) each moment brings it nearer the attracting body, and increases the power of the attraction, so every step which we take towards the full truth renders it possible to proceed more easily and more directly to the next step.

Even without considering the special circumstance that each step in the process will give us this deeper insight into the meaning of the work we are carrying on, we might find other reasons for supposing that the nature of the dialectic process is modified by use. For the conception of an agent which is purely active, acting on a material which is purely passive, is a mere abstraction, and finds a place nowhere in reality. Even in dealing with physical examples we find this. An axe has not the same effect at its second blow as at its first, for it is more or less blunted. A violin has not the same tone the second time it is played on as the first. And a conception which is inadequate even to the relations of matter must be still more unfit for application to mind when engaged on its most characteristic task. Here least of all could a rigid distinction be kept up between form and matter, between instrument and materials.

And these arguments for the existence of change in the method are also arguments for supposing that the change will be continuous. There is reason to expect a change in the method whenever we have advanced a step towards truth. But we advance towards truth, not only when we pass from one chief division of the Logic to another, but whenever we pass from category to category, however minute a subdivision of the process they may represent. It would therefore seem that a change in method is to be expected after each category, and that no two transitions throughout the dialectic present quite the same type. However continuous the change of conclusions can be made, the change of result must be equally continuous.

Besides this, we may observe that the change of method is connected

with the change from one to the other of the three great divisions of the dialectic, which respectively form the thesis, antithesis and synthesis of an all-comprehensive triad. It is thus the change from thesis to antithesis, from antithesis to synthesis, or from synthesis to a fresh thesis, which is accompanied by a change of method. But the dialectic within each of the three stages, Being, Essence and the Notion, is not looked upon as a continuous flow of thought, but is broken up again into subordinate triads, and these are again broken up into others which are still lower. Wherever the observation of thought and its consequent division are carried closer than before, we find that it takes place only by the discovery within each member of a triad of a fresh subordinate triad, and this only ceases when we have reached the furthest point of minuteness to which we are able or willing to carry our scrutiny. Consequently the change in method which is caused by a transition from member to member of the dialectic must occur, not twice only in the whole system, but wherever any step in thought is made, however minute that step may be. Whether it is or is not correct to ascribe the change in method to the increasing truth and adequacy of each category, it cannot be doubted that in some way or other they are concomitant, and as the one has many gradations in each of the three largest divisions, we have an additional reason for supposing that such gradations may also be found in the other.

5. We may, therefore, I think, fairly arrive at the conclusion, in the first place, that the dialectic process does and must undergo a progressive change, and, in the second place, that that change is as much continuous as the process of the dialectic itself. Another question now arises: has this change in the method destroyed its validity? The ordinary proofs relate only to characteristics of Being, which, as we have now found reason to believe, is only found in its purity in the very first triad of all. Does the gradual change to the types characteristic of Essence and the Notion make any difference in the justification of the method as a whole?

It would seem that it does not do so, because the force of the process is the same throughout. It consisted, in the first division of the Logic, of a search for completeness and of a search for harmony between the elements of that completeness, and these two stages are separate. Later on we have the same search for completeness and harmony, but they are combined in a single operation. In Being, the inadequacy of the thesis led on to the antithesis. Each of these ideas was regarded as an immediate and self-centred whole. On the other hand each of them implied the other, since they were complementary and opposite sides of the truth. This brought about a contradiction, which had to be reconciled by the introduction of the synthesis. Now the change in the process has the effect of discarding the intermediate stage in which the two sides of the whole are viewed as incompatible and yet inseparably connected. For in the stage of Essence each category has a reference in its own nature

to those which come before and after it. So far as the thesis refers to the antithesis which has not yet been reached, this is a reference to the as yet unknown, and does not much extend the positive content of the idea. But with the antithesis, in its reference to the thesis, which is already known, the thing is different. We have here a sort of anticipation of the synthesis, in the recognition that the two sides are connected by their own nature, and not merely by external reasoning. The result of this is that the harmony is, to a certain extent, given by the same step which gives us the completeness, and ceases to require a separate process. For when we have seen that the categories are essentially connected, we have gone a good way towards the perception that they are not incompatible. The harmony thus attained in the antithesis is, however, merely partial, and leaves a good deal for the synthesis to do. In the Notion, the change is carried further. Here we have the perception that the whole meaning of the category resides in the transition, and the whole thesis is really summed up in the antithesis, for the meaning of the thesis is thus only the production of the antithesis, and it is therefore summed up and transcended in the latter. In fact the relation of thesis, antithesis and synthesis would actually disappear in the typical form of the process as exhibited in the Notion, for each term would be the completion of that which was immediately before it, since all the reality of the latter would be seen to be in its transition to its successor. That this never actually happens, even in the final triad of the whole system, is due to the fact that the characteristic type of the Notion, as the last stage of the dialectic, represents the process as it would be when it started from a perfectly adequate premise. When, however, the premise, the explicit idea in the mind, became perfectly adequate and true, we should have rendered explicit the whole concrete idea, and the object of the dialectic process would be attained, so that it could go no further. The typical process of the Notion is therefore an ideal, to which the process approximates more and more closely throughout its course, but which it can only reach at the moment when it stops completed.

Thus it will be seen that the change may be expressed as the gradual disappearance of the explicit synthesis from without of two complementary truths which apart from that synthesis would be contradictory. This disappearance is due to the fact that the terms are gradually seen with greater and greater clearness, only to exist, first if related to one another, and then as related to one another, and consequently to carry their synthesis and harmony in themselves. No element in the original process is left out, and no fresh one introduced, but the two operations which had at first to be performed independently, and almost, as it were, in opposition to one another, the second destroying the contradictions which it seemed the chief result of the first to produce, are now seen to be inherently connected. If, therefore, any proof which may be given of the

validity of the dialectic method in its earlier stages be correct, we are entitled to say that for the same reasons it is valid through all its changing forms.

6. From this change in the method some very important inferences may be drawn. The first of these is one which we may fairly attribute to Hegel himself, because, although he does not explicitly mention it anywhere, yet it is clear from the deduction of the categories as given by him. This is the subordinate place held by negation in the whole process. Independently of this change we could observe that the importance of negation in the dialectic is by no means primary. In the first place, Hegel's logic is very far from resting, as is supposed by some people, on the violation of the law of contradiction. It rather rests on the impossibility of violating that law, on the necessity of finding, for every contradiction, a reconciliation in which it vanishes. And not only is the idea of negation destined always to vanish in the synthesis, but even its temporary introduction is an accident, though an inevitable accident. The motive force of the process lies in the discrepancy between the concrete and perfect idea implicitly in our own minds and the abstract and imperfect idea explicitly in our minds, and the essential characteristic of the process is in the search of this abstract and imperfect, not after its negation as such, but after its complement as such. It happens that its complement was also its contrary, because it happens that a concrete whole is always analysable into two direct contraries, and therefore the process always does go from an idea to its contrary. But it does not go to it because it seeks denial, but because it seeks completion.

But this can now be carried still further. Not only is the presence of negation in the dialectic a mere accident, though a necessary one, of the gradual completion of the idea. We are now led to consider it as an accident which is necessary indeed in the lower stages of the dialectic, but which is gradually eliminated in proportion as we proceed further, and in proportion as the materials from which we start are of a concrete and adequate character. For in so far as the process ceases to be from one extreme to another extreme equally one-sided, both of which regard themselves as permanent and as standing in a relation of opposition towards one another, and in so far as it becomes a process from one term to another which is recognized as in some degree mediated by the first, and as transcending it – in so far the negation of each category by the other disappears. For it is then recognized that in the second category there is no contradiction to the first, because, inasmuch as the change has been completed, the first is found to have its meaning in the transition to the second.

The presence of negation, therefore, is not only a mere accident of the dialectic, but not even an invariable accident. Its presence when it does occur, is indeed necessary, but it vanishes as the process goes further,

and the subject matter is more fully understood. It has, therefore, no inherent connection with the dialectic at all, since its introduction is due to our misapprehension, in the lower categories, of the true nature of the movement.

7. Here, however, we come upon a fresh question, and one of very great importance. We have seen that in the dialectic the relation of the various finite ideas to one another in different parts of the process is not the same – the three ideas of Being, Not-Being and Becoming standing in different relations among themselves to those which connect Life, Cognition and the Absolute Idea. Now the dialectic process professes to do more than merely to describe the stages by which we mount to the Absolute Idea – it also describes the nature of that idea itself. In addition to the information which we gain about the latter by the definition given of it at the end of the dialectic, we also know that it contains in itself as elements or aspects all the finite stages of thought through which the dialectic has passed before reaching its goal. It is not something which the dialectic reaches, and which then exists independently of the manner in which it was attained. It does not kick down the ladder by which we mount to it. It pronounces the various finite categories to be partly false and partly true, and it sums up in itself the truth of all of them. They are thus contained in it as moments. What relation do these moments bear to one another in the Absolute Idea?

We may, in the first place, adopt the easy and simple solution of saying that the relation they bear to one another as moments in the Absolute Idea is just the same as that which they bear to one another as finite categories in the dialectic process. In this case to discover their position in the Absolute Idea it is only necessary to consider the dialectic process, not as one which takes place in time, but as having a merely logical import. The process contemplated in this way will be a perfect and complete analysis of the concrete idea which is its end, containing about it the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And this, apparently, would have been Hegel's answer if the question had been explicitly presented to him, which does not appear to be the case. For he asserts, clearly and undoubtedly, that the dialectic expresses the deepest nature of objective thought.

But this conclusion seems open to doubt. For the change of method results, as we have seen, from a gradually growing perception of the truth which is at the bottom of the whole dialectic – the unreality of any finite category against its synthesis, since the truth and reality of each category consists only in its reference to the next, and in its passage onwards to it. If this were not true all through the dialectic, there could be no dialectic at all, for the justification of the whole process is that the truth of the thesis and the antithesis is contained in the synthesis, and that in so far as they are anything else but aspects of the synthesis they

are false and deceptive. This, then, is and must be the true nature of the process of thought forwards, and must constitute the real meaning and essence of the dialectic. Yet this is only explicitly perceived in the Notion, and at the end of the Notion – or rather, as I said above, is never completely perceived, but is only an ideal to which we approximate as our grasp of the subject increases. Before this the categories appear always as in their own nature permanent and self-centred, and the breaking down of this self-assertion, and the substitution for it of the perception that truth is only found in the synthesis, appears as opposed to what went before, and as in contradiction to it, although a necessary and inevitable consequence of it. But if this were really so the dialectic process would be impossible. If there really were any independent element in the lower categories, or any externality in the reconciliation, that reconciliation could never be complete and the dialectic could never claim, as it does undoubtedly claim, to sum up *all* the lower elements of truth.

The very existence of the dialectic thus tends to prove that it is not in every sense objectively correct. For it would be impossible for any transition to be made, at any point in the process, unless the terms were really related according to the type belonging to the Notion. But no transition in the dialectic does take place exactly according to that type, and most of them according to types substantially different. We must therefore suppose that the dialectic does not exactly represent the truth, since if the truth were as it represents it to be, the dialectic itself could not exist. There must be in the process, besides that element which actually does express the real notion of the transition, another element which is due to our own subjective mistake about the character of the reality which we are trying to describe.

This agrees with what was said above – that the change of method is no real change, but only a rearrangement of the elements of the transition. It is, in fact, only a bringing out explicitly of what is implicitly involved all along. In the lower categories our data, with their false appearance of independence, obscure and confuse the true meaning of the dialectic. We can see that the dialectic *has* this true meaning, even among these lower categories, by reflecting on what is implied in its existing and succeeding at all. But it is only in the later categories that it becomes explicit. And it must follow that those categories in which it is not yet explicit do not fully represent the true nature of thought, and the essential character of the transition from less perfect to more perfect forms.

The conclusion at which we are thus compelled to arrive must be admitted, I think, to be quite un-Hegelian. Hegel would certainly have admitted that the lower categories, regarded in themselves, gave views of reality only approximating, and, in the case of the lowest, only very slightly approximating, to truth. But the procession of the categories, with its advance through oppositions and reconciliations, he apparently

regarded as presenting absolute truth – as fully expressing the deepest nature of pure thought. From this, if I am right, we are forced, on his own premises, to dissent. For the true process of thought is one in which each category springs out of the one before it, and not by contradicting it, but as the expression of its deepest nature, while it, in its turn, is seen to have its deepest reality in again passing on to the one after it. There is not contradiction, no opposition, and consequently no reconciliation. There is only development, the rendering explicit what was implicit, the growth of the seed to the plant. In the actual course of the dialectic this is never attained. It is an ideal which is never quite realized, and from the nature of the case never can be quite realized. In the dialectic there is always opposition, and therefore always reconciliation. We do not go straight onward, but more or less from side to side. It seems inevitable, therefore, to conclude that the dialectic does not completely and perfectly express the nature of thought. I shall next endeavour to consider the further consequences of this admission.

The conclusion at which we arrived at the end of the first part of this article – namely, that the dialectic, even if we assume its validity, does not completely and perfectly express the nature of thought – is startling and paradoxical. For the validity of the dialectic method at all, and its power of adequately expressing the ultimate nature of thought, are so closely bound up together that they may well appear at first sight to be inseparable. The dialectic process is a distinctively Hegelian idea. Doubtless the germs of it are to be found in Fichte and others; but it was only by Hegel that it was fully worked out and made the central point of a philosophy. And in so far as it has been held since, it has been held substantially in the manner in which he stated it. To retain the doctrine, and to retain the idea that it is of cardinal importance while denying that it adequately represents the nature of thought, appears to be a most unwarranted and gratuitous choice between ideas which their author held to be inseparable.

Yet I cannot see what alternative is left to us. For it is Hegel himself who refutes his own doctrine. The state to which the dialectic, according to him, gradually approximates is one in which the terms 'thesis', 'anti-thesis' and 'synthesis' can have no meaning. For in this state there is no opposition to create the relation of thesis and antithesis, and, therefore, no reconciliation of that opposition to create a synthesis. 'Whatever is distinguished is without more ado and at the same time declared to be identical, one with another, and with the whole.' 'The antithesis which the Notion lays down is no real antithesis' (*Enc.*, section 161.) Now, nowhere in the dialectic do we entirely get rid of the relation of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, not even in the final triad of the process. The inference seems inevitable that the dialectic cannot fully represent, in any

part of its movement, the real and essential nature of pure thought. The only thing to be done is to consider whether, with this all-important limitation, the process has any longer any real significance, and if so, how much.

Since the dialectic does, if the hypothesis I have advanced be correct, represent the inevitable course our minds are logically bound to follow when they attempt to deal with pure thought, while it does not adequately represent the nature of pure thought itself, it follows that it must be in some degree subjective. We have now to determine exactly the meaning to be applied to this rather ambiguous word in this connection. On the one hand, it is clear that it is not subjective in the sense in which the word has been defined as meaning 'that which is mine *or* yours'. It is no mere empirical description or generalization. For whatever we may hold with regard to the success or failure of the dialectic in apprehending the true nature of thought will not at all affect the question of its internal necessity and of its cogency for us. The dialectic is not an account of what men have thought or may think. It is a demonstration of what they must think, provided they wish to deal with Hegel's problem at all, and to deal with it consistently and truly.

On the other hand, we must now pronounce the dialectic process to be subjective in this sense – that it does not fully express the essential nature of thought, but obscures it more or less under particulars which are not essential. It may not seem very clear at first sight how we can distinguish between the necessary course of the mind when engaged in pure thought, which the dialectic method, according to this hypothesis, is admitted to be, and the essential nature of thought, which it is not allowed that it can express. What, it may be asked, is the essential nature of thought, except that course which it must and does take whenever we think?

We must remember, however, that according to Hegel thought can only exist in its complete and concrete form – that is as the Absolute Idea. The import of our thought may be, and of course often is, a judgment under some lower category, but our thought itself, as an existent fact, distinguished from the meaning it conveys, must be concrete and complete. For to stop at any category short of the complete whole involves a contradiction, and a contradiction is a sign of error. Now our judgments can be erroneous and often are, and so we can, and do, make judgments which involve a contradiction. But there is no intelligible meaning in saying that a fact is erroneous, and therefore, if we find a contradiction in any judgment, we know that it cannot be true of facts. It follows that, though it is unquestionably true that we can predicate *in* thought categories other than the highest, and even treat them as final, it is no less certain that we cannot truly predicate *of* thought, any more than of any other reality, any category but the Absolute Idea.

This explains how it is possible for the actual and inevitable course of thought not to express fully and adequately its own nature. For thought may be erroneous or deceptive when it is treating of thought, as much as when it is treating of any other reality. And it is possible that under certain circumstances the judgment expressed in our thoughts may be inevitably erroneous or deceptive. If these judgments have thought as their subject matter we shall then have the position in question – that the necessary course of thought will fail to express properly its own nature.

It is, of course, the fact that we should never know that a particular judgment had expressed inadequately the nature of thought unless some other judgment afterwards corrected it, and enabled us to see where the mistake lay. It would be, therefore, meaningless to say that our judgments were always necessarily inadequate to the nature of thought. For if it were so, we could never find it out. But it is quite possible that, under given circumstances, our judgments may be inadequate to the nature of thought, and that we may detect this inadequacy by means of other judgments made under more favourable circumstances. And this is what I maintain with regard to the dialectic. When we are engaged in actually making the transitions from category to category, we are compelled to regard the process in a way which we afterwards see to be only partially correct, when, from the knowledge gained by the completion of the whole logic, we look back, and consider what is involved in its existing at all.

The mistake, as we have already noticed, consists in the fact that whereas the true process – which forms the essence of the actual process in time, and which alone is preserved and summed up in the Absolute Idea – is a direct process from one term which exists only in the transition to another, the actual process, on the other hand, is one from contradictory to contradictory, each of which is conceived as possessing some stability and independence. The reason for this mistake lies in the nature of the process, as one from error to truth. For while error remains in our conclusions, it must naturally affect our comprehension of the logical relations by which those conclusions are connected, and induce us to suppose them other than they are. In particular, it may be traced to the circumstance that the dialectic starts with the knowledge of the part, and from this works up to the knowledge of the whole. This method of procedure is always inappropriate in anything of the nature of an organism. Now the reality denoted by the Absolute Idea is more than an organism. The Absolute Idea contains within itself the idea of organism, and transcends and completes it. The form of combination in the Absolute Idea is even more intimate and close than that of organism – one in which the parts are still more indivisibly and essentially related to the whole. And here, therefore, even more than with organisms, will it be an inadequate and deceptive attempt if we endeavour to comprehend the

whole from the standpoint of the part. And this is what the dialectic, as it progresses, must necessarily do. Consequently, not only are the lower categories of the dialectic inadequate except as mere moments of the Absolute Idea, but their relation to each other is not the relation which they have in the Absolute Idea, and consequently in all existence. These relations, in the dialectic, represent more or less the error through which the human mind is gradually attaining to the truth. They do not adequately represent the relations existing in the truth itself. To this extent, then, the dialectic is subjective.

9. And the dialectic is also to be called subjective because it not only fails to show clearly the true nature of thought, but, as we remarked above, does not fully express its own meaning – the meaning of the process forwards. For the real meaning of the advance, if it is to have any objective reality at all, if it is to be a necessary consequence of all attempts at deep and consistent thinking, must be the result of the nature of thought as it exists. Our several judgments on the nature of thought have not in themselves any power of leading us on from one of them to another. It is the relation of these judgments to the concrete whole of thought, incarnate in our minds and in all our experience, which creates the dialectic movement. Since this is so, it would seem that the real heart and kernel of the process is the movement of abstractions to rejoin the whole from which they have been separated, and that the essential part of this movement is that by which we are carried from the more abstract to the more concrete. This will be determined by the relations in which the finite categories stand to the concrete idea, when they are viewed as abstractions from it and aspects of it – the only sense in which they really exist. But the true relation of the abstractions to the concrete idea is, as we have already seen, that to which the dialectic method gradually approximates, but which it never reaches, and not that which it starts with and gradually, but never entirely, discards. And so the dialectic advance has, mixed up with it, elements which do not really belong to the advance, or to the essence of pure thought, but are merely due to our original ignorance about the latter, of which we only gradually get rid. For all that part of the actual advance in the dialectic which is different from the advance according to the type characteristic of the Notion has no share in the real meaning and value of the process, since it does not contribute to what alone makes that meaning and value, the restoration of the full and complete idea. What this element is we can learn by comparing the movement of the dialectic which is typical of Being with that which is typical of the Notion. It is the element of opposition and contradiction, the element of immediacy in the finite categories, and the negation by them of their antitheses, and (until forced, so to speak, into submission) of their syntheses. It is, so to speak, the transverse motion as opposed to the forward motion. The dialectic always

moves onwards at an angle to the straight line which denotes advance in truth and concreteness. Starting unduly on one side of the truth, it oscillates to the other, and then corrects itself. Once more it finds that even in its corrected statement it is still one-sided, and again swings to the opposite extreme. It is in this indirect way alone that it advances. And the essence of the process is the advance alone. The whole point of the dialectic is its gradual attainment to the Absolute Idea. In so far, then, as the process is not direct advance to the absolute, it does not express the essence of the process only, but also the inevitable inadequacies of the human mind when considering a subject matter which can only be fully understood when the consideration has been completed.

And, as was remarked above, it also fails to express its own meaning in another way. For the imperfect type of transition, which is never fully eliminated, represents the various categories as possessing some degree of independence and self-subsistence. If they really possessed this, they could not be completely absorbed in the syntheses, and the dialectic could not be successful. The fact that it is successful proves that it has not given a completely correct account of itself, and, for this reason also, it deserves to be called subjective, since it does not fully express the objective reality of thought.

Moreover, the method in the higher categories is described as making explicit that which was implicit lower down. Now the distinction between explicit and implicit is only that between what is completely and what is incompletely understood. The peculiarities of the method in the lower categories, therefore, must be due to the subject being as yet not fully understood. This defect cannot attach to finite categories as moments of the Absolute Idea, for as such, being seen in the light of the whole, they must be fully understood. And the Absolute Idea, according to Hegel, is completely true, and adequate to express reality, and its composition cannot, therefore, be in any way due to our want of comprehension. Now, as we have seen, the essential part of the dialectic process depends on the relation of the finite categories to the Absolute Idea. The characteristics of method from which the dialectic gradually works itself free are, therefore, to be looked on only as necessary confusions of the human mind in beginning its investigations of the nature of pure thought. And as the dialectic never quite shakes itself free from these characteristics, it always retains some amount of the confusion, and can never therefore, perfectly represent the true nature of thought.

10. Having decided that the dialectic is to this extent subjective, we have to consider how far this will reduce its cardinal significance in philosophy, or its practical importance. I do not see that it need do either. For all that results from this new position is that the dialectic is a process through error to truth. Now we knew this before. For on any theory of the dialectic it remains true that it sets out with inadequate

ideas of the universe, and finally reaches adequate ideas. We now go further and say that the relation of these inadequate ideas to one another does not completely correspond to anything in the nature of things. But the general position is the same as before, that we gain the truth in the dialectic, but that the steps by which we reach it contain mistakes. We shall see that there is no essential difference between them in this respect if we consider in more detail in what the importance of the dialectic lies.

This importance is threefold. The first branch of it depends chiefly on the end being reached, and the second two chiefly on the means by which it is reached. The first of these lies in the conclusion that if we can predicate any category whatever of a thing, we are thereby entitled to predicate the Absolute Idea of it. Now we can predicate some category of everything whatever, and the Absolute Idea is simply the description in abstract terms of the human reason, or, in other words, the human spirit is the incarnation of the Absolute Idea. From this it follows that the mind could, if it only saw clearly enough, see itself in everything. The importance of this conclusion is obvious. It gives the assurance of that harmony between ourselves and the world for which philosophy always seeks, and by which alone science, morality and religion can be ultimately justified.

Hegel was entitled, on his own premises, to reach this conclusion by means of the dialectic. And the different view of the relation of the dialectic to reality which I have ventured to put forward does not at all affect the validity of the dialectic for this purpose. For the progress of the dialectic remains as necessary as before. The progress is indirect, and we have come to the conclusion that the indirectness of the advance is not in any way due to the essential nature of pure thought, but entirely to our own imperfect understanding of that nature. But the whole process is still necessary, and the direct advance is still essential. And all that we want to know is that the direct advance is necessary. We are only interested, for this particular purpose, in proving that from any possible standpoint we are bound in logical consistency to advance to the Absolute Idea. In this connection it is not of the least importance what is the nature of the road we travel, provided that we must travel it, or whether the steps express truth fully, provided that the final conclusion does so. Now the theory of the subjectivity of the dialectic process leaves the objectivity and adequacy of the result of the dialectic unimpaired. And therefore for this function the system is as well adapted as it ever was.

11. The second ground of the importance of the Hegelian logic consists in the information which it is able to give us about the world as it is here and now for us, who have not yet been able so clearly to interpret all phenomena as only to find our own most fundamental nature manifesting itself in them. As we see that certain categories are superior in concreteness and truth to others, since they come later in the chain and have

transcended the meaning of their predecessors, we are able to say that certain methods of regarding the universe are more correct and significant than others. We are able to see that the idea of organism, for example, is a more fundamental explanation than the idea of causality, and one which we should prefer whenever we can apply it to the matter in hand.

Here also the value of the dialectic remains unimpaired. For whether it does or does not express the true nature of thought with complete correctness; it certainly, according to this theory, does show the necessary and inevitable connection of our finite judgments with one another. The utility which we are now considering lies in the guide which the dialectic can give us to the relative validity and usefulness of these finite judgments. For it is only necessary to know their relations to one another, and to know that as the series goes further, it goes nearer to the truth. Both these things can be learned from the dialectic. That it does not tell us the exact relations which subsist in reality is unimportant. For we are not here judging reality, but our own judgments about reality.

The third function of the dialectic process is certainly destroyed by the view of it as subjective which I have expressed. For Hegel the dialectic showed the relation of the categories to one another as moments in the Absolute Idea, and in reality. We are now forced to consider those moments as related in a way which is inadequately expressed by the relation of the categories to one another. We are not, however, deprived of anything essential to the completeness of the system by this. In the first place, we are still able to understand completely and adequately what the Absolute Idea is. For although one definition was given of it by which it was simply the whole series of the categories gathered into a whole, yet a more direct and independent one may also be found, by which it is described as 'the notion of the idea to which the idea itself is the object' – as the mind which recognizes itself in all things. Our inability to regard the process any longer as an adequate analysis of the Absolute Idea will not leave us in ignorance of what the Absolute Idea really is.

And, in the second place, we are not altogether left in the dark even as regards the analysis of the Absolute Idea. The dialectic, it is true, never fully reveals the true nature of thought which forms its secret spring, but it gives us data by which we can discount the necessary error. For the connection of the categories resembles the true nature of thought (which is expressed in the typical transition of the Notion) more and more closely as it goes on, and at the end of the logic it differs from it only infinitesimally. By observing the type to which the dialectic method approximates throughout its course, we are thus enabled to tell what element in it is that which is due to the essential nature of thought. It is that element which is alone left when, in the typical movement of the Notion, we see how the dialectic would act if it could act with full self-consciousness. It is true that in the lower categories we can never see

the transition according to this type, owing to the necessary confusion of the subject matter in so low a stage, which hides the true nature of the process to which the dialectic endeavours to approximate. But we can regard the movement of all the categories as compounded, in different proportions according to their position, of two forces, the force of opposition and negation, and the force of advance and completion, and we can say that the latter is due to the real nature of the advancing dialectical thought and the former to our misconceptions about it. In other words, the amount of error in the dialectic is inevitable, but it can be ascertained, and need not therefore introduce any doubt or scepticism into the conclusions to which the dialectic may lead us.

12. What, then, is this real and essential element in the advance of thought which is revealed, though never completely, in the dialectic? In the first place, it is an advance which is direct. The element of indirectness which is introduced by the movement from thesis to antithesis, from opposite to opposite, diminishes as the dialectic proceeds, and, in the ideal type, wholly dies away. In that type each category is seen to carry in itself the implication of the next beyond it, to which thought then proceeds. The lower is lower only because of the implicitness of part of its meaning; it is no longer one-sided, requiring to be corrected by an equal excess on the other side of the truth. And, therefore, no idea stands in an attitude of opposition to any other; there is nothing to break down, nothing to fight. All that aspect of the process belongs to our misapprehension of the relation of the abstract to the concrete. While looking up from the bottom, we may imagine the truth is only to be attained by contest, but in looking down from the top – the only true way of examining a process of this sort – we see that the contest is only due to our misunderstanding, and that the growth of thought is really direct and unopposed.

The movement of the dialectic may perhaps be compared with advantage to that of a ship tacking against the wind. If we suppose that the wind blows exactly from the point which the ship wishes to reach, and that, as the voyage continues, the sailing powers of the ship improve so that it becomes able to sail closer and closer to the wind, the analogy will be rather exact. It is impossible for the ship to reach its destination by a direct course, as the wind is precisely opposite to the line which that course would take, and in the same way it is impossible for the dialectic to move forward without the triple relation of its terms, and without some opposition between thesis and antithesis. But the only object of the ship is to proceed towards the port, as the only object of the dialectic process is to attain to the concrete and complete idea, and the movement of the ship from side to side of its course is labour wasted, in so far as the end of the voyage is concerned, though necessarily wasted, since the movement forward would be impossible without the

combination with it of a lateral movement. In the same way the advance in the dialectic is merely in the gradually increasing completeness of the ideas, and the opposition of one idea to another and the consequent negation and contradiction do not mark any real step towards attaining the knowledge of the essential nature of thought, although they are necessary accompaniments of the process of gaining that knowledge. Again, the change in the ship's course which brings it nearer to the wind, and reduces the distance which it is necessary to travel to accomplish the journey, will correspond to the gradual subordination of the elements of negation and opposition which we have seen to take place as we approach the end of the dialectic.

13. We shall find confirmation for our view of the gradual change in the method of the dialectic if we examine the all-including and supreme triad, of which all the others are moments. This triad is given by Hegel as Logic, nature and Spirit.

If we inquire as to the form which the dialectic process is likely to assume here, we find ourselves in a difficulty. For the form of transition in any particular triad was determined by its place in the series. If it was among the earlier categories, it approximated to the character given as typical of Being; if it did not come till near the end, it showed more or less resemblance to the type of the Notion. And we were able to see that this was natural, because the later method, being more direct and less encumbered with irrelevant material, was only to be attained when the work previously done had given us sufficient insight into the real nature of the subject matter. This principle, however, will not help us here. For the transition which we are here considering is both the first and the last of its series, and it is impossible therefore to determine its characteristic features by its place in the order. The less direct method is necessary when we are dealing with the abstract and imperfect categories with which our investigations must begin; the more direct method comes with the more adequate categories. But his triad covers the whole range, from the barest category of the Logic – that of pure Being – to the culmination of human thought in Absolute Spirit.

Since it covers the whole range in which all types of the dialectic method are displayed, the natural conclusion would seem to be that one of them is as appropriate to it as another, that whichever form may be used will be more or less helpful and significant, because the process does cover the ground in which that form can appropriately be used; while, on the other hand, every form will be more or less inadequate, because the process covers ground on which it cannot appropriately be used. If we cast it in the form of the Notion, we shall ignore the fact that it starts with categories too inadequate for a method so direct; if, on the other hand, we try the form of the categories of Being, the process contains material for which such a method is inadequate.

And if we look at the facts we shall find that they confirm this view, and that it is possible to state the relation of Logic, nature and Spirit to one another in two different ways. Hegel himself states it in the manner characteristic of the Notion. It is not so much positive, negative and synthesis, as universal, particular and individual that he points out. In the Logic thought is to be found in pure abstraction from all particulars (we cannot, of course, think it as abstracted from particulars, but in the Logic we attend only to the thought, and ignore the data it connects). In nature we find thought again, for nature is part of experience, and more or less rational, and this implies that it has thought in it. In nature, however, thought is rather buried under the mass of data which appear contingent and empirical; we see the reason is there, but we do not see that everything is completely rational. It is described by Hegel as the idea in a state of alienation from itself. Nature is thus far from being the mere contrary and correlative of thought. It is thought and something more, thought incarnate in the particulars of sense. At the same time, while the transition indicates an advance, it does not indicate a pure advance. For the thought is represented as more or less overpowered by the new element which has been added, and not altogether reconciled to and interpenetrating it. In going forward it has also gone to one side, and this requires, therefore, the correction which is given to it in the synthesis, when thought, in Spirit, completely masters the mass of particulars which for a time had seemed to master it, and when we perceive that the truth of the universe lies in the existence of thought as fact, the incarnation of the Absolute Idea – in short, in Spirit.

Here we meet all the characteristics of the Notion. The second term, to which we advance from the first, is to some extent its opposite, since the particulars of sense, entirely wanting in the first, are in undue prominence in the second. But it is to a much greater extent the completion of the first, since the idea, which was taken in the Logic in unreal abstraction, is now taken as embodied in facts, which is the way it really exists. The only defect is that the embodiment is not yet quite complete and evident. And the synthesis which removes this defect does not, as in earlier types of the dialectic, stand impartially between thesis and antithesis, each as defective as the other, but only completes the process already begun in the antithesis. It is not necessary to compare the two lower terms, Logic and nature, to be able to proceed to Spirit. The consideration of nature alone would be sufficient to show that it postulated the existence of Spirit. For we have already in nature both the sides required for the synthesis, though their connection is so far imperfect, and there is consequently no need to refer back to the thesis, whose meaning has been incorporated and preserved in the antithesis. The existence of the two sides, not completely reconciled, in the antithesis in

itself postulates a synthesis, in which the reconciliation shall be completed.

14. But it would also be possible to state the transition in the form which is used in the Logic for the lower part of the dialectic. In this case we should proceed from pure thought to its simple contrary, and from the two together to a synthesis. This simple contrary will be the element which, together with thought, forms the basis for the synthesis which is given in Spirit. And as nature, as we have seen, contains the same elements as Spirit, though less perfectly developed, we shall find this contrary of thought to be the element in experience, whether of nature or of Spirit, which cannot be reduced to thought. Now of this element we know that it is immediate and that it is particular – not in the sense in which nature is particular, in the sense of incompletely developed individuality, but of abstract particularity. It is possible to conceive that in the long run all other characteristics of experience except these might be reduced to a consequence of thought. But however far the process of rationalization might be carried, and however fully we might be able to answer the question of why things are as they are and not otherwise, it is impossible to get rid of a datum which is immediate and therefore unaccounted for. For thought is only mediation, and must therefore exist in conjunction with something immediate on which to act. If nothing existed but thought itself, still the fact of its existence must be in the long run immediately given, and one for which thought itself could not account. This immediacy is the mark of the element which is essential to experience and irreducible to thought.

If, then, we wished to display the process from Logic to Spirit according to the Being-type of transition, we should, starting from pure thought as our thesis, put as its antithesis the element of immediacy and 'givenness' in experience. This element can never be properly or adequately described, since all description involves the predication of categories of the subject and is consequently mediation; but by abstracting the element of mediation in experience, as in the Logic we abstract the element of immediacy, we can form some idea of what it is like. Here we shall have thought and immediacy as exactly opposite and counter-balancing elements. They are each essential to the truth, but present themselves as opposed to one another. Neither of them has the other at all as a part of itself, though by external reasoning it can be seen that one implies the other. But each of them negates the other as much as it implies it, and the relation, without the synthesis, is one of opposition and contradiction. We cannot see, as we can when a transition assumes the Notion form, that the whole meaning of the one category lies in its transition to the other. The synthesis is the notion of experience or reality, in which we have the given immediate mediated. This contains both nature and Spirit, the former as the more imperfect stage, the latter as the more perfect,

culminating in the completely satisfactory conception of Absolute Spirit. Nature stands in this case in the same relation to Absolute Spirit as do the lower forms of Spirit – as forms equally concrete but less perfectly developed.

This triad could give as cogent a proof as the other. It could be shown, in the first place, that mere mediation is unmeaning except in relation to the merely immediate since without something to mediate it could not act. In the same way it could be shown that the merely given, without any action of thought on it, could not exist, since any attempt to describe it, or even to assert its existence, involves the use of some category, and therefore of thought. And these two extremes, each of which negates the other and at the same time demands it, are reconciled in the synthesis of actual experience, whether nature or Spirit, in which the immediate is mediated, and both extremes in this way gain for the first time reality and consistency.

The possibility of this alternative arrangement affords, as I mentioned above, an additional argument in favour of the view that the change of method is essential to the dialectic, and that it is due to the progressively increasing insight into the subject which we gain as we pass to the higher categories and approximate to the completely adequate result. For in this instance, when the whole ground from beginning to end of the dialectic process is covered in a single triad, we find that either method may be used, which suggests of itself that the two methods are approximate to the two ends of the series which are here, and here only, united by a single step. Independently of this, however, it is also worth while to consider the possibility of the double transition attentively, because it may help us to explain the origin of some of the misapprehensions of Hegel's meaning which are by no means uncommon.

We saw above that the dialectic more closely represented the real nature of thought in the later categories, when it appeared more direct and spontaneous, than in the earlier stages, when it was still encumbered with negations and contradictions. Of the two possible methods of treating this particular transition – that which Hegel actually adopted, and that which we have just seen to be also possible – it would appear beforehand that the former would be that which would be the most expressive and significant. On inquiry we shall find that this is actually the case. For there is no real opposition between thought and immediacy; neither can exist without the other. Now, in the method adopted by Hegel, the element of immediacy comes in first in nature, and not as an element opposed to, though necessarily connected with, the mediation of the Logic, but as already bound up with it in a unity, which unity is nature. This expresses the truth better than a method which starts by considering the two aspects as two self-centred and independent realities, which have to be connected by reasoning external to themselves. For by the latter,

even where they are finally reconciled in a synthesis, it is done, so to speak, against their will, since their claims to independence are only forced from them by the *reductio ad absurdum* to which they are reduced when they are seen, as independent, to be at once mutually contradictory and mutually implied in each other. In this method the transitory nature of the incomplete categories, and their movement forward of their own essential nature, are not sufficiently emphasized.

And we shall find that the subject matter of the transition is too advanced to bear stating according to the Being-type without showing that that type is not fully appropriate to it. Logic and immediacy are indeed as much on a level as Being and Not-Being. There is no trace whatever in the former case, any more than in the latter, of a rudimentary synthesis in the antithesis. But the other characteristic of the lower type – that the thesis and the antithesis should claim to be mutually exclusive and independent – cannot be fully realized. Being and Not-Being, although they may be shown by reasoning to be mutually implicated, are at any rate *prima facie* distinct and opposed. But mediation and immediacy, although opposed, are nevertheless connected, even *prima facie*. It is impossible even to define the two terms without suggesting that each of them is, by itself, unstable, and that their only real existence is as aspects of the concrete whole in which they are united. The method is not sufficiently advanced for the matter it deals with, which compels it to modify its form.

15. It is, however, as I endeavoured to show above, *a priori* probable that neither method would fully fit this particular case. And not only the one which we have just discussed, but the one which Hegel preferred to it, will be found to some degree inadequate to its task here. The latter, no doubt, is the more correct and convenient of the two; yet its use alone, without the knowledge that it did not in this case exclude the concurrent use of the latter as equally legitimate, may lead to grave miscomprehensions of the system.

For the use of that method which Hegel does not adopt – the one in which the terms are Logic, Immediacy and Experience – has at any rate this advantage, that it brings out the fact that Immediacy is as important and ultimate a factor in reality as Logic is, and one which is irreducible to it. The two terms are exactly on a level. In point of fact we begin with the Logic and go from that to Immediacy, because it is to the completed idea of the Logic that we come if we start from the idea of pure Being, and we naturally start from that idea, because it alone, of all our ideas, is the one whose denial carries with it, at once and clearly, self-contradiction. But the transition from Immediacy to Logic is exactly the same as that from Logic to Immediacy. And as the two terms are correlative in this way, it would be comparatively easy to see, by

observing them, that neither of them derived their validity from the other, but both from the synthesis.

This is not so clear when the argument takes the other form. The element of Immediacy here never appears as a separate and independent term at all. It appears in nature for the first time, and here it is already in combination with thought. And nature and Logic are not correlative terms, from either of which we can proceed to the other. The transition runs from Logic to nature – from thought by itself to thought combined with Immediacy. It is not unnatural, therefore, to suppose that Immediacy is dependent on, and deducible from, pure thought, while the reverse process is not possible. The pure reason is supposed to make for itself the material in which it is embodied. 'The logical bias of the Hegelian philosophy', says Pro. Seth, 'tends . . . to reduce things to mere types or "concretions" of abstract formulæ' (*Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 126). [See above, p. 29–R.S.] It might, I think, be shown that other considerations conclusively prove this view to be incorrect. In the first place, throughout the Logic there are continual references which show that pure thought requires some material, other than itself, in which to work. And, second, the spring of all movement in the dialectic comes from the synthesis towards which the process is working, and not from the thesis from which the start is made. Consequently, progress from Logic to nature could, in any case, prove, not that the additional element in nature was derived from thought, but that it co-existed with thought in the synthesis which is their goal. But although the mistake might have been avoided, even under the actual circumstances, it could scarcely have been made if the possibility of the alternative method of deduction had been known. Immediacy would, in that case, have been treated as a separate element in the process, and as one which was correlative with pure thought, so that it could scarcely have been supposed to have been dependent on it.

The more developed method, again, tends rather to obscure the full meaning and importance of the synthesis, unless we realize that in this method part of the work of the synthesis is already done in the second term. This is of great importance, because we have seen that it is in their synthesis alone that the terms gain any reality and validity, which they did not possess when considered in abstraction. In the earlier method we see clearly that pure thought is one of these abstractions, as mere immediacy is the other. It is, therefore, clear that each of these terms, taken by itself, is a mere abstraction, and could not possibly, out of its own nature, produce the other abstraction and the reality from which they both come. From this standpoint it would be impossible to suppose that out of pure thought were produced nature and Spirit.

Now, in the type characteristic of the Notion, the same element appears both in thesis and antithesis, although in the latter it is in combination

with a fresh element. There is, therefore, a possibility of misunderstanding the process. For an element which was both in thesis and antithesis might appear not to be merely a one-sided abstraction, but to have the concreteness which is to be found in the synthesis, since it appears in both the extremes into which the synthesis may be separated. When, for example, we have Logic, nature and Spirit, we might be tempted to argue that pure thought could not be only one side of the truth, since it was found in each of the lower terms – by itself in Logic, and combined with immediacy in nature – and hence to attribute to it a greater self-sufficiency and importance than it really possesses.

This mistake will disappear when we realize that the only reason that pure thought appears again in the second term of the triad is that the synthesis, in transitions of this type, has already begun in the antithesis. It is only in the synthesis that thought appears in union with its opposite, and, apart from the synthesis, it is as incomplete and unsubstantial as is immediacy.

But the change in the type of the process is not sufficiently emphasized in Hegel, and there is a tendency on the part of observers to take the type presented by the earliest categories as that which prevails all through the dialectic. And as, in the earlier type, one of the extremes could not have been found in both the first and second terms of a triad, it is supposed that pure thought cannot be such an extreme, cannot stand in the same relation to spirit as Being does to Becoming, and is rather to be looked on as the cause of what follows it than as an abstraction from it.

16. I have endeavoured to show that the view of the dialectic given in this paper, while we cannot suppose it to have been held by Hegel, is, nevertheless, not unconnected with his system. The germs of it are to be found in his exposition of the change of method in the three great divisions of the process, and the observation of the details of the system confirm this. But it was not sufficiently emphasized, nor did Hegel draw from it the consequences, particularly as regards the subjective nature of the dialectic, which I have tried to show logically result from it.

But there is, nevertheless, justification for our regarding this theory as a development and not a contradiction of the Hegelian system, since some such view is really a condition of the existence of any dialectic system at all. And we have seen that it will affect neither of the great objects which Absolute Idealism claims to have accomplished – the demonstration that the real is rational and the rational is real, and the classification, according to their necessary relations and intrinsic value, of the various categories which we use in ordinary and finite thought.

Many other questions might be raised, and indeed must be raised before even the formal validity of the Hegelian system could be finally determined. Perhaps the most important of these is the relation of the

dialectic process to the movement of time. How far Hegel regarded the Absolute Idea as already realized and how far only as an ideal, how the fundamental rationality of the universe is related to the obvious imperfections, either in the world or our judgments about it, which exist round us, and what amount of objective or subjective reality can be ascribed to the incomplete dialectic process – these are points of vital importance. Not less important is the consideration of the nature of the Absolute Spirit which gives reality to the whole process, and which is treated by Hegel in a manner which would require careful criticism. But with these points it is impossible for me to deal here.

The dialectic system is not so wonderful or mystic as it has been represented to be. It makes no attempt to deduce existence from essence; it does not even attempt to eliminate the element of immediacy in experience, and to produce a self-sufficient and self-mediating thought. It cannot even, if the view I have taken is right, claim that its course is a perfect mirror of the nature of reality. But although the results which it attains are comparatively commonplace, they go as far as we can for any practical purpose desire. For, if we accept the system, we learn from it that in the universe is realized the whole of reason, and nothing but reason. Contingency, in that sense in which it is baffling and oppressive to our minds, has disappeared. For it would be possible, according to this theory, to prove that the only contingent thing about the universe was its existence as a whole, and this is not contingent in the ordinary sense of the word. Hegel's philosophy is thus capable of satisfying the needs, theoretical and practical, to satisfy which philosophy originally arose, nor is there any reason to suppose that he ever wished it to do more.

Time and the Hegelian dialectic (1893–4)

J. Ellis McTaggart

One of the most interesting and important questions which arise in connection with Hegel's philosophy is the question of the relation between the succession of the categories in the dialectic and the succession of events in time. Are we to regard the complex and concrete Absolute Idea, in which alone true reality is to be found, as gradually growing up in time by the evolution of one category after another? Or are we to regard the Absolute Idea as existing eternally in its full completeness, and the succession of events in time as something which has no part in any ultimate system of the universe?

The succession of categories in Hegel's Logic is, of course, not primarily a temporal succession. We pass from one to another because the admission of the first as valid logically requires the admission of the second as valid. At the same time there are various reasons for accepting the view that one category succeeds another in time. One of the facts of the universe which requires explanation is the existence of time, and it seems at first sight a simple and satisfactory explanation to account for it by the gradual development of the notion from Pure Being to the Absolute Idea. And Hegel certainly explains history to some extent by bringing the successive events under the successive categories.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that such a view is incompatible with the system. In the first place, the theory that time is an ultimate reality would lead to insoluble difficulties as to the commencement of the process. Second, the Absolute Idea must be held to be the presupposition and the logical *prius* of the lower categories. It follows that a theory which makes the appearance of the lower category the presupposition of the appearance of the higher one cannot fully represent the ultimate reality of the process. And, finally, Hegel's language seems to be decisively on the side of the hypothesis that the Absolute Idea exists eternally in its

full perfection, and that the movement from the lower to the higher is reconstruction and not construction.

Let us consider the first of these points. Hegel, of course, maintains that the universe is fully rational. Can we regard as fully rational a universe in which a process in time is a fundamental reality? The theory before us maintains that the universe starts with a minimum of reality, corresponding only to the category of Pure Being. From this point it develops by the force of the dialectic. Gradually each of the higher categories becomes real, and this gradual evolution of logical completeness makes the process which constitutes the life of the universe. All the facts around us are to be attributed to the gradually developing idea, and when the development is complete, and reality has become an incarnation of the Absolute Idea, then the process will end in perfection. The spirituality of the universe, up till then implicit and partial, will have become complete and explicit. The real will be completely rational, and the rational will be completely real.

On this we must remark, in the first place, that the process in time by which the dialectic develops itself must be regarded as finite, and not as infinite. Neither in experience nor in *a priori* criticism can we find any reason to believe that infinite time really exists, or is anything more than an illegitimate inference from the infinite extensibility of time. Nor, if it did exist, could it form part of an ultimate rational explanation of the universe. An unending regress, whether true or not, is certainly not a solution which meets the demands of reason. More especially is it impossible that it should be accepted as part of an Hegelian theory. For infinite time would be the strongest possible example of the 'false infinite' of endless aggregation, which Hegel invariably condemns as a mere mockery of explanation.

And, independently of this, it is clear that an infinite series in time would not be an embodiment of the dialectic. For the dialectic is most emphatically a process with a beginning and an end, and any series which embodies it must have a beginning and an end also. If the dialectic has any truth at all, there can be no steps before Pure Being, or any steps after the Absolute Idea. The process must commence at a fixed point, and cannot therefore occupy infinite time.

We may take it, then, that the theory which imagines the dialectic to develop itself gradually regards it as doing so in a limited time. What follows from this hypothesis?

The first difficulty which arises is that every event in time requires a previous event as its cause. How, then, shall we be able to explain the first event of the complete series? The first term, like all the others, is an event in time, that is it had a beginning, before which it did not exist. What determined the change which brought it into existence? Whatever determined it must be itself an event in time, for if it had not a definite

place in the time series it could not account for its effect having one. But in this case it will itself need a determining cause, which will also be an event, and we have thus lost our finite series with a definite beginning, and embarked on an infinite series, which cannot, as we have seen, be of any assistance to us in our present purpose.

On the other hand, to deny that the first term of such a series requires a determining cause is impossible. It is perhaps not impossible that our minds should form the conception of something on which other things depend, while it depends itself on nothing. But an event in time could never hold such a place. For an event in time has always before it a time when it was not, and this coming into existence deprives it of the possibility of being self-subsistent. Time, as Hegel expresses it, is that which is outside itself. It has no principle of unity or coherence. It can only be limited by something outside itself. Our finite series in time can only have the definite beginning which it requires by means of further time beyond it. To fix any point in time is to imply the existence of time upon both sides of it. And thus no event in time could be accepted as an ultimate beginning. On the other hand, some such event would have to be accepted as the ultimate beginning, if a finite series were to be accepted as an ultimate explanation.

If we apply this to the particular problem before us, we shall find that the theory that the Absolute Idea develops in time lands us in a hopeless difficulty. Let us suppose that all the phenomena of the universe have been accounted for as the manifestations of the gradually developing Idea, and let us suppose that each of these manifestations of the idea has been shown to be the logical consequence of the existence of the previous manifestation. Then the final and ultimate fact upon which our explanation will depend will be that at the beginning of time the first of the categories – the category of Pure Being – manifested itself in reality. And for this fact itself an external explanation is required. No such explanation, indeed, would be required for the deduction of the universe from the idea of Pure Being. If the system is correct, the categories are so inseparably connected that the existence of one stage in the dialectic process implies the existence of all, and the existence of any reality, again, implies the existence of the categories. The category of Pure Being can thus be deduced from the existence of the universe as a whole, and the existence of the universe as a whole does not require, as it does not admit, any outside cause. But here, to account for the existence of the universe in time, we have taken as our ultimate fact the realization of the first category at a particular time. Time is in itself quite empty and indifferent to its content. No possible reason could be given why the process should not have begun a hundred years later than it did, so that we should be at the present moment in the middle of the French Revolution. The only way of fixing an event to a particular time is by connecting

it with some other event which happened in a particular time. This would lead here to an infinite regress, and, independently of this, would be impracticable. For, by the hypothesis, the dialectic development was to account for the entire universe, and there can, therefore, be no event outside it to which it can be referred in order that it can be accounted for itself. And yet the question – why it happened now and not at another time – is one which we cannot refrain from asking, since time must be regarded as infinitely extensible.

Various attempts have been made to evade this difficulty. It has been suggested that the temporal process has its root in a timeless state. If we ask what determined the first event, we are referred to the timeless state. If we ask what caused the latter, we are answered that it had no beginning, and consequently required no cause.

But how could a timeless reality be the cause of a succession in time? It could no doubt, be the cause of everything else in a series of successive events, except of the fact that they did take place in time. But how are we to account for that? No reconciliation and no mediation is possible upon the hypothesis with which we are here dealing. According to some views of the question time might be regarded as nothing but a form assumed by eternity, or time and the timeless might be regarded as forms of a higher reality. But such a view is impossible here. The theory which we are here considering had to explain the fact of a succession in the universe, and did so by making the central principle of the universe to be the realization of the dialectic in time. The realization in time, according to this theory, is as much part of the ultimate explanation of the universe as the dialectic itself. By making time ultimate we certainly get rid of the necessity for explaining it. But, on the other hand, we lose the possibility of treating time as a distinction which can be bridged over, or explained away, when we wish to make a connection between time and the timeless. If time is an ultimate fact, then the distinction between that which does, and that which does not, happen in time must be an ultimate distinction; and how are we to make, if this is so, a transition from the one to the other?

So far as a thing is timeless, it cannot change, for with change time comes necessarily. But how can a thing which does not change produce an effect in time? That the effect was produced in time implies that it had a beginning. And if the effect begins, while no beginning can be assigned to the cause, we are left to choose between two alternatives. Either there is something in the effect – that is the quality of coming about as a change – which is altogether uncaused. Or the timeless reality is only a partial cause, and is determined to act by something which is not timeless. In either case the timeless reality fails to explain the succession in time, and we are no better off than we were before. It would be equally available as an explanation if the process had begun at any

point besides the one at which it actually did begin, and a cause which can remain the same while the effect varies is obviously unsatisfactory.

It may be objected in answer to this that, if the dialectic process is the ultimate truth of all change, the point in time at which it is to begin is determined by the nature of the case. For time only exists when change exists. The changeless would be the timeless. Therefore the beginning of the change must come at the beginning of time, and there can be no question why it should come at one moment rather than another.

This, however, is unsound. Actual time may only have begun with actual change. But possible time stretches back indefinitely beyond this. It is part of the essential nature of time that beyond any given part of it we can imagine a fresh part – indeed we must do so. We cannot conceive time as coming to an end. And with this indefinite stretch of possible time, the question again arises: what determined the timeless to produce change at the point it did, and not in the previous time, which we now regard as possible only, but which would have become actual by the production of change in it? And again there is no reason why the series of actual time should not have been placed later in the series of possible time than it actually was. Actual time begins whenever change begins, and so cannot be regarded as a fixed point by which the beginning of change can be determined. A certain amount of the dialectic process has now been realized in time. Can we give any reason why the amount should not have been greater or less? Yet if no such reason can be given, the present state of the universe is left unaccounted for by our system.

The difficulty lies in the fact that we are compelled by the nature of time to regard the time series as indefinitely extended, and to regard each member of it as, in itself, exactly like each other member. We may call that part of the series which is not occupied by actual change possible time, but the very name implies that there is no reason why it should not have been occupied by events, as much as the past which actually is so. And as possible time is indefinite it is indefinitely larger than any finite time. The question we have been discussing will then take the form: why is this particular part of the time series filled with reality rather than any other part? And since, apart from its contents, one moment of time is precisely like another, it would seem that the question is insoluble.

It has sometimes been endeavoured to ignore on general grounds all attempts to show that development throughout a finite period in time cannot be accepted. Time, it has been said, must be either finite or infinite. If we accept the objections to taking finite time as part of our ultimate explanation, it can only be because we are bound to an infinite regress. An infinite regress involves infinite time. But infinite time is impossible – an unreal abstraction, based on the impossibility of limiting the regress in thought. Any argument which involves its real existence is thereby reduced to an absurdity. And since the objections to finite time

as part of our ultimate explanation do involve its real existence, we may, it is asserted, safely ignore the objections and accept the principle.

The first objection which we must make to this is that the argument might as well be reversed. If the difficulties in the way of infinite time are to be taken as a reason for ignoring all difficulties in the way of finite time, why should we not make the difficulties in the way of finite time a ground for accepting with equally implicit faith the existence of infinite time?

Nor can we escape by saying that we do know finite time to exist, and that therefore we are entitled to ignore the objections to it, while we accept the objections to infinite time. For we have no more experience of finite time, in the sense in which the phrase is used in this argument, than we have of infinite time. What we meet in experience is a time series, extending indefinitely both before and after our immediate contact with it, out of which we can cut finite portions. But for a theory which makes the development of the notion in time part of its ultimate formula, we require a time which is not merely limited in the sense of being cut off from other time, but in the sense of having none before and none after it. Of this we have no more experience than we have of infinite time, and if there are difficulties in the way of both, we have no right to prefer the one to the other.

Since either hypothesis as to the extension of time leads us into equal difficulties, our course should surely be not to accept either, but to reject both. Time must be either finite or infinite, we are told. But there is a third alternative. There may be something wrong in our conception of time, or rather, to speak more precisely, there may be something which renders it unfit, in metaphysics, for the ultimate explanation of the universe, however suited it may be to the finite thought of everyday life. If we ask whether time, as a fact, is finite or infinite, we find hopeless difficulties in the way of either answer. Yet if we take time as an ultimate reality, there seems no other alternative. Our only resource is to conclude that time is not an ultimate reality.

This is the same principle which is at work in the dialectic itself. When we find that any category, if we analyse it sufficiently, lands us, in its application to reality, in contradictions, we do not accept one contradictory proposition and reject the other. We conclude the category in question to be an inadequate way of looking at reality, and we try to find a higher conception, which will embrace all the truth of the lower one, while it will avoid the contradictions. This is what we ought, it would seem, to do with the idea of time. If it only presents us with a choice between impossibilities, we must regard it as an inadequate way of looking at the universe. And in this case we cannot accept the development of the dialectic in time as part of our ultimate solution.

Beside these difficulties, which would equally perplex any idealistic

system which adopted a time process as an original element, there is another which belongs specially to the dialectic. It appears to be essential to the possibility of a dialectic that the highest term in which the process ends shall be taken as the presupposition of all the lower terms. The passage from category to category must not be taken as an actual advance, producing that which did not previously exist, but as an advance from an abstraction to the concrete whole from which the abstraction was made – demonstrating and rendering explicit what was before only implicit and immediately given, but still only reconstructing and not constructing anything fresh.

This view of Hegel's system becomes inevitable when we consider, on the one hand, that his conclusion is that all that is real is rational, and, on the other hand, that his method consists in proving that each of the lower steps of the dialectic, taken by itself, is not rational. We cannot then ascribe reality to any of these steps, except in so far as they lose their independence and become moments of the Absolute Idea.

We are compelled, according to Hegel, to pass from each thesis and antithesis to their synthesis, by discovering that the thesis and antithesis, while incompatible with one another, nevertheless involve one another. This produces a contradiction, and this contradiction can only be removed by finding a term which reconciles and transcends them.

Now if we suppose that the dialectic process came into existence gradually in time, we must suppose that all the contradictions existed at one time or another independently, and not reconciled, i.e. as contradictions. Indeed, as the time process is still going on, all the reality round us at the present day must consist of unreconciled contradictions.

This would be inconsistent with the law of contradiction. To say that the world consists of reconciled contradictions would produce no difficulty, for it means nothing more than that it consists of things which appear contradictory when not thoroughly understood. But to say that a contradiction can exist as such would plunge us in utter confusion. All reasoning, Hegel's as much as anybody else's, rests on the law that two contradictory propositions cannot both be true. It would be useless to reason if, when you have demonstrated your conclusion, it was as true to assert the opposite of that conclusion.

And, again, if contradictory propositions could both be true, the special line of argument which Hegel follows would have lost all its force. We are enabled to pass on from the thesis and antithesis to the synthesis just because a contradiction cannot be true, and the synthesis is the only way out of it. But if contradictions are true, there is no necessity to find a way out of it, and the advance of the dialectic loses all its force. If the contradictions exist at all, there seems no reason that they should not continue to do so. We should not be able to avoid this by saying that they are real, but that their imperfection made them transitory. For the

dialectic process, even if we suppose it to take place in time, is not a mere succession in time, but essentially a logical process. Each step has to be proved to follow from those before it by the nature of the latter. It is clear that it would be impossible, by mere analysis of a logical category, to deduce the conclusion that for some time it could exist independently, but that after that its imperfection would drive it on to another stage.

It is only on the supposition that reality always corresponds to the Absolute Idea, and is not merely approximating to it, that we can meet another difficulty which is propounded by Trendelenburg. Either, he says, the conclusion of the whole process can be obtained by analysis of the original premise, or it cannot. The original premise of the whole process is nothing but the validity of the idea of Pure Being. If the whole conclusion can be got from this, we learn nothing new, and the whole dialectic process is futile. If, on the other hand, we introduce anything not obtained from our original premise, we fail in our object – which was to prove that the whole system followed when that premise was once admitted.

The only escape from this difficulty is to be found in realizing that though the validity of the lower category is the only explicit admission required for the process, it is not the only material we have before us. Categories are forms of thought which we apply to reality, and which have no meaning except as so applied. And all reality embodies, as it must do to be self-consistent and free from contradictions, the Absolute Idea, although in many cases when we experience reality much of this is only implicit. In all our consciousness, therefore, we have implicit the whole process and result of the dialectic, although in many cases only few categories are explicitly acknowledged to be valid. And it is the conjunction of the explicit partial truth with the reality which implicitly contains the whole truth which forces the mind on to a more adequate explicit statement.

This is brought out by Mr Bradley in his *Logic* (Book iii, Part i, chap. ii, §§20 and 21): 'An idea prevails that the dialectic method is a sort of experiment with conceptions *in vacuo*. We are supposed to have nothing but one single isolated abstract idea, and this solitary monad then proceeds to multiply by gemination from or by fission of its private substance, or by fetching matter from the impalpable void. But this is a mere caricature, and it comes from confusion between that which the mind has got before it and that which it has within itself. Before the mind there is a single exception, but the whole mind itself, which does not appear, engages in the process, operates on the *datum* and produces the result. The opposition between the real, in that fragmentary character in which the mind possesses it, and the true reality felt within the mind, is the moving cause of that unrest which sets up the dialectical process.' And

again: 'The whole, which is both sides of this process, rejects the claim of a one-sided *datum*, and supplements it by that other and opposite side which really is implied – so begetting by negation a balanced unity. This path once entered on, the process starts afresh with the whole just reached. But this also is seen to be the one-sided expression of a higher synthesis; and it gives birth to an opposite which co-unites with it into a second whole, a whole which in its turn is degraded into a fragment of truth. So the process goes on till the mind therein implicit finds a product which answers its unconscious idea; and here, having become in its own entirety a *datum* to itself, it rests in the activity which is self-conscious in its object.'

If we hold, according to this view, that the dialectic process depends on the relation between the concrete whole and the part of it which has as yet become explicit, it is clear that we cannot regard the concrete whole as produced out of the incomplete and lower category by means of the dialectic process, since the process cannot exist without the whole which is its presupposition.

Hegel's own language appears to me to confirm this theory. There is nothing contrary to it in his attempt in the *Philosophy of Religion*, the *Philosophy of History* and the *History of Philosophy* to explain various successions of events in time as manifestations of the dialectic. If the dialectic is the key to the universe, then, whenever we do view the universe under the aspect of time, the different categories will appear as manifesting themselves as a process in time. But the fact that they can appear successively, and in time, does not necessarily imply that they came into existence successively, and are fundamentally a time series.

Even in this part of his work, too, Hegel's adherence to the eternal nature of the dialectic becomes evident in a manner all the more significant because it is logically unjustifiable. In several places he seems on the point of saying that all dissatisfaction with the existing state of the universe, and all efforts to reform it, are futile and vain, since reason is already and always the sole reality. The conclusion cannot be fairly drawn from the eternity of the dialectic process. For if we are entitled to hold the universe perfect, the same arguments lead us to consider it also timeless and changeless. Imperfection and progress then may claim to share whatever reality is to be allowed to time and change, and no conclusion can be drawn, such as Hegel appears at times inclined to suggest, against attempting to make the future an improvement on the past. But the very fact that he has gone too far in his application of the idea that the dialectic is timeless makes it more clear that he did hold that idea.

There are not, I believe, any expressions in the *Logic* which can be fairly taken as suggesting the development of the dialectic. It is true that two successive categories are named Life and Cognition, and that science

informs us that Life existed in this world before Cognition. But the names of the categories must be taken as those of the phenomena in which the idea in question shows most clearly, and not as indicating the only form in which the idea can show itself at all. Otherwise we should be led to the impossible result that Notions, Judgments and Syllogisms existed before Cognition.

The strongest expression of the eternal nature of the process is to be found in the *Encyclopaedia* (§212, lecture note). 'Die Vollführung des unendlichen Zwecks ist so nur die Täuschung aufzuheben, als ob er noch nicht vollführt sey. Das Gute, das absolute Gute, vollbringt sich ewig in der Welt, und das Resultat ist, dass es sich an und für sich vollbracht ist und nicht erst auf uns zu warten braucht.'

Another important piece of evidence is his treatment of his own maxim: 'All that is real is rational.' To the objections to this he replies, first, by saying that reality does not mean the surface of things, but something deeper behind them. Besides this he admits occasionally, though apparently not always, that contingency has rights within a sphere of its own where reason cannot demand that everything should be explained. But he never tires to meet the attacks made on his principle by drawing a distinction between the irrational reality of the present and the rational reality of the future. Such a distinction would be so natural and obvious, and would, for those who could consistently make use of it, so completely remove the charge of a false optimism about the present, that we can scarcely doubt that Hegel's neglect of it was due to the fact that he saw it to be incompatible with his principles.

Hegel's treatment of time, moreover, confirms this view. For he considers it merely as a stage in the Philosophy of Nature, which is only an application of the Logic. Now if the realization of the categories of the Logic only took place in time, time would be an element in the universe, correlative with the Logic, and of equal importance in it. Both would be equal elements in a concrete whole. Neither could be looked on as an application of, or deduction from, the other. But the treatment of time merely as one of the phenomena which result from the realization of the Logic is incompatible with such a theory as this, and we may fairly conclude that time had not for Hegel this ultimate importance.

We have thus arrived at the conclusion that the dialectic is not for Hegel a process in time, but that the Absolute Idea must be looked on as eternally realized. We are very far, however, from having got rid of our difficulties. We seem, indeed, to be brought to a *reductio ad absurdum*. For if the other theory was incompatible with Hegel, this seems to be incompatible with the facts.

The dialectic process is one from incomplete to complete rationality. If it is eternally fulfilled, then the universe must be completely rational. Now, in the first place, it is certain that the universe is not completely

rational for us. We are not able to see everything round us as manifestation of the Absolute Idea. Even those students of philosophy who believe on general grounds that the Absolute Idea must be manifested in everything are as unable as the rest of us to see how it is manifested in a table or a thunder-storm. We can only explain these things by much lower categories, and we cannot, therefore, explain them completely. Nor are we by any means able to eliminate completely the contingency of the data of sense, without which the categories are void and meaningless, and a universe which contains an ultimately contingent element cannot be held to be completely rational. It would seem, too, that if we are perfectly rational in a perfectly rational universe, there must always be a complete harmony between our desires and our environment. And this, too, is not invariably the case.

But if the universe appears to us not to be perfect, can it be so in reality? Does not the very failure to perceive the perfection destroy it? In the first place, the Absolute Idea, as laid down by Hegel, is one of self-conscious rationality – the Idea to which the Idea itself is ‘Gegenstand und Objekt’ (*Encyclopaedia* §236). If any part of reality sees anything, except the Absolute Idea, anywhere in reality, this ideal can scarcely be said to have been fulfilled.

And, more generally, if the universe appears to us to be only imperfectly rational, we must be either right or wrong. If we are right, the world is not perfectly rational. But if we are wrong, then it is difficult to see how we can be perfectly rational. And we are part of the world. Thus it would seem that the very opinion that the world is imperfect must, in one way or another prove its own truth.

If this is correct, we shall be confronted with a difficulty as hopeless as that which encountered us when we supposed the dialectic to develop itself in time. For these latter were due to our hypothesis being found incompatible with the system, while our present view is untenable because, though a logical development from the system, it appears incompatible with the facts. The result with regard to the first is that we come to the conclusion that the development in time cannot be part of Hegel’s philosophy. The result of the second would at first sight seem to be that Hegel’s philosophy must be abandoned, since it leads to such untenable conclusions.

We rejected the hypothesis of the development of the Absolute Idea in time upon two grounds. The first was that we had to choose between a false infinite and an uncaused beginning. Each of these hypotheses left something unexplained and contingent, and was consequently incompatible with a system which demanded above all things that the universe should be completely rationalized, and which believed itself to have accomplished its aim. Our second objection was due to the fact that the development of the dialectic at all, upon Hegel’s principles, presupposed

the existence of its goal, which could not therefore be supposed to be reached for the first time by the process. But our difficulty now is not at all incompatible with the system. It is one which must arise from it, and which must, in some form or another, arise in any system of complete idealism. Every such system must declare that the world is fundamentally rational and righteous throughout, and every such system will be met by the same difficulty. How, if all reality is rational and righteous, are we to explain the irrationality and unrighteousness which are notoriously part of our everyday life? We must now consider the various attempts which have been made to answer this question.

Hegel's answer has been indicated in the passage quoted above from the *Logic* (§21). The infinite end is really accomplished eternally. It is only a delusion on our part which makes us suppose otherwise. And the only real progress is the removal of the delusion. The universe is eternally the same, and eternally perfect. The movement is only in our minds. They trace one after another in succession the different categories of the *Logic*, which in reality have no time order, but continually coexist as elements of the Absolute Idea which transcends and unites them.

This solution can, however, scarcely be accepted, for the reasons given above. How can we account for the delusion that the world is partially irrational if, as a matter of fact, it is completely rational? How, in particular, can we regard such a delusion as compatible with our own complete rationality?

To this it may be possibly objected that our argument is based on a confusion. That a thought is a delusion need not imply that it, or the being who thinks it, is irrational. Everything which, like a thought, is used as a symbol can be viewed in two aspects – first as a fact, and second as representing, as a symbol, some other fact. In the first aspect we say that it is real or unreal; in the second that it is true or false. These two pairs of predicates have no intrinsic connection. A false judgment is just as really a fact as a true one.

Now the conclusion from the Hegelian dialectic was that whatever was real was rational. We are, therefore, compelled to assert that every thought, and every thinking being, are completely rational – can be explained in a way which gives entire rest and satisfaction to reason. But, it may be said, this is not in the least interfered with by the fact that many real thoughts are defective symbols of the other reality which they profess to represent. The false can be real – indeed, must be – for a thought cannot misrepresent reality unless it is itself real. Till it is real it can do nothing. And if it can be real, why can it not be rational? Indeed we often, in everyday life, and in science, do find the false to be more or less rational. It is as possible to account, psychologically, for the course of thought which brings out an erroneous conclusion as for the course of thought which bring out a correct one. We can explain our

failures to arrive at the truth as well as our successes. It would seem then that there is nothing to prevent ourselves and our thoughts being part of a completely rational universe, although our thoughts are in some respects incorrect symbols.

But it must be remembered that the rationality which Hegel requires of the universe is much more than complete determination under the category of cause and effect – a category which the dialectic maintains to be quite insufficient, unless transcended by a higher one. He requires, among other things, the validity of the idea of final cause. And if this is brought in, it is difficult to see how delusions can exist in a rational world. For a delusion involves a thwarted purpose. If a man makes a mistake, it means that he wishes to know the truth, and that he does not know it. Whether this is the case or not, with regard to simple perception of the facts before us, it cannot be denied that wherever there is a long chain of argument, to which the mind is voluntarily kept attentive, there must be a desire to know the truth. And if this desire is unsuccessful, the universe cannot, in Hegel's sense, be completely rational.

This becomes more evident if we look at Hegel's definition of complete rationality, as we find it in the Absolute Idea. The essence of it is that reality is to be conscious of its own rationality. The idea is to be 'Gegenstand und Objekt' to itself. If this is the case, it follows that the rationality of spirit as an existent object depends upon its being a faithful symbol of the rationality expressed in other manifestations of spirit. The delusion to which Hegel reduces all imperfection will, of course, prevent its being a faithful symbol of that rationality, and will therefore destroy the rationality itself. In so far as we do not see the perfection of the universe, we are not perfect ourselves. And as we are part of the universe, that too cannot be perfect. And yet its perfection appears to be a necessary consequence of Hegel's position.

At the end of the first part of this paper we had arrived at the conclusion that the conception of the dialectic process as eternally realized involved the assertion that the universe was fundamentally perfect, and that Hegel's attempt to explain away the obvious imperfection around us, by treating it as a delusion, had failed to bring the perfection of reality and the imperfection of appearance into harmony with one another.

Is there any other method which might be more successful? Can the denial of the ultimate reality of time, which caused the difficulty, by rendering it necessary to take the dialectic as eternally realized, be made to cure the wound which it has itself made? Would it not be possible, it might be said, to escape from our dilemma in this way? The dialectic itself teaches us that it is only the concrete whole which is completely rational, and that any abstraction from it, by the very fact that it is an abstraction, must be to some degree false and contradictory. An attempt

to take reality, moment by moment, element by element, must make it appear imperfect. The complete rationality is only in the whole which transcends all these elements, and any one of them, considered as more or less independent, must be false. Now, if we look at the universe as in time, it will appear to be a succession of events, so that only part of it is existing at any given instant, the rest being either past or future. Each of these events will be represented as real in itself, and not merely as a moment in a real whole. And in so far as events in time are taken to be, as such, real, it must follow that reality does not appear rational. If an organic whole – and such we have taken the universe to be – is perfect, then any one of its parts, taken separately from the whole, cannot possibly be perfect. For in such a whole all the parts presuppose one another, and any one, taken by itself, must bear the traces of its isolation and incompleteness. And not only each event, but the whole universe taken as a series of events, would thus appear imperfect. Even if such a series could ever be complete, it could not fully represent the reality, since the parts would still, by their existence in time, be isolated from one another, and claim some amount of independence. Thus the apparent imperfection of the universe would be due to the fact that we are regarding it *sub specie temporis* – an aspect which we have seen reason to conclude that Hegel himself did not regard as adequate to reality. If we could only see it *sub specie aeternitatis*, we should see it in its real perfection.

It is true, I think, that in this way we get a step nearer to the goal required than we do by Hegel's own theory, which we previously considered. Our task is to find, for the apparent imperfection, some cause whose existence will not interfere with the real perfection. We shall clearly be more likely to succeed in this in proportion as the cause we assign is a purely negative one. In the former case the appearance of imperfection was accounted for as a delusion of our minds. A delusion is a positive fact, and wants a positive cause, and, as we have seen, it is impossible to conceive this positive cause except as something which will prevent the imperfection being a delusion at all. Then, however, the cause of the imperfection is nothing but the fact that we do not see everything at once. Seen as we see things now, the world must be imperfect. But if we can attain to the point of looking at the whole universe *sub specie aeternitatis*, we shall see just the same subject matter as in time; but it will appear perfect, because seen as a single concrete whole, and not as a succession of separated abstractions. The only cause of the apparent imperfection will be the negative consideration that we do not now see the whole at once.

This theory would be free from some of the objections which are fatal to a rather similar apology for the universe often put forward by optimistic systems. They admit that from the point of view of individuals the world

is imperfect and irrational, but assert that these blemishes would disappear if we could look at the world as a whole. Such a theory, since it declares that the universe can be really perfect, although imperfect for individuals, implies that some individuals, at any rate, can be treated merely as means and not as ends in themselves. Without inquiring whether such a view is at all tenable, it is at any rate clear that it is incompatible with what is usually called optimism, since it would permit of many – indeed of all – individuals being doomed to eternal and infinite misery. We should be led to the formula in which Mr Bradley sums up optimism. 'The world is the best of all possible worlds, and everything in it is a necessary evil' (*Appearance and Reality*, p. xiv). For if the universal harmony can make any evil to individuals compatible with its own purposes, there is no principle upon which we can limit the amount which it can tolerate. Such a view could not possibly be accepted as in any way consistent with Hegel's system. It would be in direct opposition to its whole tendency, which is to regard the universal as only gaining reality and validity when, by its union with the particular, it becomes the individual. For Hegel the ideal must lie, not in ignoring the claims of individuals, but in seeing in them the embodiment of the universal.

Mr Bradley's own treatment of the problem is of a rather similar type. He has to reconcile the harmony which he attributes to the Absolute with the disharmony which undoubtedly prevails, to some extent, in experience. This he does by taking the finite individual to be, as such, only appearance and not reality, from which it follows that it must distort, and cannot adequately partake in, the harmony of the Absolute. It may be doubted whether we do not fall into more difficulties than we avoid by this low estimate of the conscious individual. But, at any rate, such a solution would be impracticable for anyone who accepted Hegel's version of the Absolute Idea, to which the individual is the highest form that the universal can take.

The objections which apply to the attempt to save the perfection of the Absolute by ignoring the claims of individuals will not apply to our endeavour to escape from our difficulty by ignoring, so to speak, the claims of particular moments of time. None of those considerations which make us consider each separate person as an ultimate reality, whose claims to self-realization must be satisfied, and cannot be transcended, apply to separate periods of time. Indeed the whole drift of Hegel's system is as much against the ultimate reality of a succession of phenomena, as such, as it is for the ultimate reality of individual persons, as such. To deny *any* reality in what now presents itself to us as a time series would indeed be suicidal. For we have no data given us for our thought, except in the form of a time series, and to destroy our data would be to destroy our superstructure. But while philosophy could not start if it did not accept its data, it could not proceed if it did not alter

them. There is then nothing obviously impossible in the supposition that the whole appearance of succession in our experience is, as such, unreal, and that reality is one timeless whole, in which all that appears successive is really coexistent, as the houses are coexistent which we see successively from the windows of a train.

It cannot, however, be said that this view is held by Hegel himself. In the *Philosophy of Nature* he treats time as a stage in the development of nature, and not as a cause why there is any successive development at all. Indeed he says there (§258) that things are not finite because they are in time, but are in time because they are finite. It would be thus impossible, without departing from Hegel, to make time the cause of the apparent imperfection of the universe.

Everything else in the Hegelian philosophy may indeed be considered as of subordinate importance to the Dialectic, and to its goal, the Absolute Idea. If it were necessary, to save the validity of the dialectic, we might reject Hegel's views even on a subject so important as time, and yet call ourselves Hegelians. But we should not gain much by this reconstruction of the system. For it leaves the problem no more solved than it was before. The difficulty which proved fatal to Hegel's own attempt to explain the imperfection comes back as surely as before, though it may not be quite so obvious. However much we may treat time as mere appearance, it must, like all other appearance, have reality behind it. The reality, it may be answered, is in this case the timeless Absolute. But this reality will have to account, not merely for the facts which appear to us in time, but for this appearance of succession which they do undoubtedly assume. How can this be done? What reason can be given why the eternal reality should manifest itself in a time process at all? If we tried to find the reason outside the nature of the eternal reality, we should be admitting that time had some independent validity, and we should fall back into all the difficulties mentioned in the first part of this paper. But if we try to find the reason inside the nature of the eternal reality, we shall find it to be incompatible with the complete rationality which, according to Hegel's theory, that reality must possess. For the process in time is, by the hypothesis, the root of all irrationality, and how can it spring from anything which is quite free of irrationality? Why should a concrete and perfect whole proceed to make itself imperfect, for the sake of gradually getting rid of the imperfection again? If it gained nothing by the change, could it be completely rational to undergo it? But if it had anything to gain by the change, how could it previously have been perfect?

We have thus failed again to solve the difficulty. However much we may endeavour to make the imperfection of the universe merely negative, it is impossible to escape from the fact that, as an element in presentation, it requires a positive cause. If we denied this, we should be forced into

the position that not only was our experience of imperfection a delusion, but it was actually non-existent. And this, as was mentioned above, is an impossibility. All reasoning depends on the fact that every appearance has a reality of which it is the appearance. Without this we could have no possible basis upon which to rest any conclusion.

Yet, on the other hand, so long as we admit a positive cause for the imperfection, we find ourselves to be inconsistent with the original position from which we started. For that position asserted that the sole reality was absolutely perfect. To this real perfection as cause, we have to ascribe apparent imperfection as effect. Now it is not impossible, under certain circumstances, to imagine a cause as driven on, by a dialectic necessity, to produce an effect different from itself. But in this case it does seem impossible. For any self-determination of a cause to produce its effect must be due to some incompleteness in the former without the latter. But if the cause, by itself, was incomplete, it could not, by itself, be perfect. If, on the other hand, it is perfect, it is impossible to see how it could be determined to produce a result alien to itself. Thus we oscillate between two extremes, each equally fatal. If we endeavour to treat evil as absolutely unreal, we have to reject the one basis of all knowledge. But in so far as we accept it as a manifestation of reality, we find it impossible to avoid qualifying the cause by the nature of the effect which it produces, and so contradicting the main result of the dialectic – the harmony and perfection of the Absolute.

We need not, after all, be surprised at the apparently insoluble problem which confronts us. For the question has developed into the old difficulty of the origin of evil, which has always baffled both theologians and philosophers. The original aim of the dialectic was to prove that all reality was completely rational. And Hegel's arguments led him to the conclusion that the universe, as a whole, could not be rational, except in so far as each of its parts found its own self-realization. It followed that the universe, if harmonious on the theoretical side, would be harmonious also from a practical aspect – that is would be in every respect perfect. This produces a dilemma. Either the evil round us is real, or it is not. If it is real, then reality is not perfectly rational. But if it is absolutely unreal, then all our finite experience – and we know of no other – must have an element in it which is absolutely irrational, and which, however much we may pronounce it to be unreal, has a disagreeably powerful influence in moulding the events of our present life. Nor can we even hope that this element is transitory, and comfort ourselves, in orthodox fashion, with the hope of a heaven in which the evil shall have died away, while the good remains. For we cannot assure ourselves of such a result by any empirical arguments from particular data, which would be hopelessly inadequate to support such a conclusion. The only chance would be an *a priori* argument founded on the essential rationality of the universe,

which might be held to render the imperfection transitory. But we should have no right to use such an argument. To escape the difficulties involved in the present coexistence of rationality and irrationality, we have reduced the latter to such complete unreality that it is not incompatible with the former. But this cuts both ways. If the irrationality cannot interfere with the rationality so as to render their present coexistence impossible, there can be no reason why their future coexistence should ever become impossible. If the irrational is absolutely unreal now, it can never become less real in the future. Thus our ascription of complete rationality to the universe leads us to a belief that one factor in experience, as it presents itself to us, is fundamentally and permanently irrational – a somewhat singular conclusion from such a premise.

To put the difficulty from a more practical point of view, either the imperfection in experience leaves a stain on perfection, or it does not. If it does, there is no absolute perfection, and we have no right to expect that the imperfection around us is a delusion or a transitory phase. But if it does not, then there is no reason why the perfection should ever feel intolerant of it, and again we have no right to hope for its disappearance. The whole practical interest of philosophy is thus completely overthrown. It asserts an abstract perfection beyond experience, but that is all. Such a perfection might almost as well be a thing-in-itself, since it is unable to explain any single fact of experience without the aid of another factor, which it may call unreal, but which it finds indispensable. It entirely fails to rationalize it or to reconcile it with our aspirations.

The conclusion we have reached is one which it certainly seems difficult enough to reconcile with continued adherence to Hegelianism. Of the two possible theories as to the relation of time to the dialectic process, we have found that one, besides involving grave difficulties in itself, is quite inconsistent with the spirit of Hegel's system. The other, again, while consistent with that system, and, indeed, appearing to be its logical consequence, has landed us in what seems to be a glaring contradiction to the facts. Is it not inevitable that we must reject a system which leads us to such a result?

Before deciding on such a course, however, it might be wise to see if we can really escape from the difficulty in such a way. If the same problem, or one of like nature, proves equally insoluble in any possible system, we may be forced to admit the existence of an incompleteness in our philosophy, but we shall no longer have any reason to reject one system in favour of another. Now, besides the theory which has brought us into this trouble – the theory that reality is fundamentally rational – there are, it would seem, three other possibilities. Reality may be fundamentally irrational. It may be the product of two independent principles of rationality and irrationality. Or it may be the work of some

principle to which rationality and irrationality are equally indifferent – some blind fate, or mechanical chance.

These possibilities may be taken as exhausting the case. It is true that, on Hegelian principles, a fifth alternative has sometimes to be added, when we are considering the different combinations in which two predicates may be asserted or denied of a subject. We may say that it is also possible that the two predicates should be combined in a higher unity. This would leave it scarcely correct to say, without qualification, that either is asserted or either denied of the subject. But synthesis is itself a process of reasoning, and unites its two terms by a category in which we recognize the nature of each extreme as a subordinate moment, which is harmonized with the other. The harmony involves that, wherever a synthesis is possible, reason is supreme. And so, if the truth were to be found in a synthesis of the rational and the irrational, that synthesis would itself be rational – resolving, as it would, the whole universe into a unity expressible by thought. Thus we should have come round again to Hegel's position that the world is fundamentally rational.

We need not spend much time over the supposition that the world is fundamentally irrational – not merely regardless of reason, but contrary to reason. To begin with, such a hypothesis refutes itself – first, because it would explain the world by the fact that it was completely incapable of explanation, and second, because the conception of complete irrationality is self-contradictory. The completely irrational could never be known to exist, for even to say a thing exists implies its determination by at least one predicate, and therefore its comparative rationality. More particularly, we may remark here that such a theory would meet with a difficulty precisely analogous to that which conflicts with Hegel's theory, except that in this case the stumbling-block would lie, not in the existence of some irrationality in the universe, but in the existence of some rationality. To explain away the latter would be as impossible as we have found it to be to explain away the former. Yet it is at least as impossible to conceive how the fundamentally irrational should manifest itself as rationality as it is to conceive the converse process. We shall gain nothing, then, by deserting Hegel for such a theory as this.

It might seem as if a dualistic theory would be well adapted to the chequered condition of the actual world. But as soon as we try to construct such a theory, difficulties arise. The two principles, of rationality and irrationality, to which the universe is referred will have to be absolutely separate and independent. For if there were any common unity to which they should be referred, it would be that unity and not its two manifestations which would be the ultimate explanation of the universe, and our theory, having become monistic, resolves itself into one of the others, according to the attitude of this single principle towards reason, whether favourable, hostile or indifferent.

We must then refer the universe to two independent and opposed forces. Nor will it make any important difference if we make the second force to be, not irrationality, but some blind force not in itself hostile to reason. For in order to account for the thwarted rationality which meets us everywhere in the universe, we shall have to suppose that the result of the force is, as a fact, opposed to reason, even if opposition to reason is not its essential nature.

In the first place, can there be really two independent powers in the universe? Surely not. As Mr Bradley remarks (*Appearance and Reality*, p. 141), 'Plurality must contradict independence. If the beings are not in relation, they cannot be many; but if they are in relation they cease forthwith to be absolute. For, on the one hand, plurality has no meaning, unless the units are somehow taken together. If you abolish and remove all relations, there seems no sense left in which you can speak of plurality. But, on the other hand, relations destroy the real's self-dependence. For it is impossible to treat relations as adjectives, falling simply inside the many beings. And it is impossible to take them as falling outside somewhere in a sort of unreal void, which makes no difference to anything. Hence . . . the essence of the related terms is carried beyond their proper selves by means of their relations. And, again, the relations themselves must belong to a larger reality. To stand in a relation and not to be relative, to support it and yet not to be affected and undermined by it, seem out of the question. Diversity in the real cannot be the plurality of independent beings. And the oneness of the Absolute must hence be more than a mere diffused adjective. It possesses unity as a whole and as a single system.'

The argument had additional strength in this case. For the two forces which we are asked to take as absolutely opposed are, by the hypothesis which assumed them, indissolubly united. Both forces are regarded as all-pervading. Neither can exist by itself anywhere. Every fact in the universe is due to the interaction of the two. And, further, they can only be described and defined in relation to one another. If the dualism is between the rational and the irrational as such, it is obvious that the latter, at any rate, has meaning only in relation to its opposite. And if we assume that the second principle is not directly opposed to rationality, but simply indifferent to it, we shall get no further in our task of explaining the imperfect rationality which appears in our data, unless we go on to assume that its action is contrary to that of a rational principle. Thus a reference to reason would be necessary, if not to define our second principle, at any rate to allow us to understand how we could make it available for our purpose.

We cannot, besides, describe anything as irrational, or as indifferent to reason, without ascribing to it certain predicates – Being, Substance, Limitation, for example. Nor can we refer to a principle as an explanation

of the universe without attributing to it Causality. These determinations may be transcended by higher ones, but they must be there, at least as moments. Yet anything to which all these predicates can be ascribed cannot be said to be entirely hostile or indifferent to reason, for it has some determinations common to it and to reason, and must be, therefore, in more or less harmony with the latter. But if this is so, our complete dualism fails us.

The two principles then can scarcely be taken as absolutely independent. But if they cannot, our dualism fails to help us, and indeed vanishes. We were tempted to resort to it because the two elements in experience – the rationality and the want of rationality – were so heterogeneous as to defy reduction to a single principle. And if we cannot keep our two principles distinct, but are compelled to regard them as united in a higher unity, we might as well return explicitly to monism.

But even if we could keep the two principles independent, it seems doubtful if we should be able to reach by means of this theory a solution of our difficulty. The forces working for and against the rationality of the universe must either be in equilibrium or not. If they are not in equilibrium, then one must be gaining on the other. The universe is then fundamentally a process. In this case we shall gain nothing by adopting dualism. For the difficulties attendant on conceiving the world as a process were just the reason which compelled us to adopt the theory that the universe was at present perfectly rational. The process must be finite in length, since we can attach no meaning to an actual infinite process. And since it is still continuing, we shall have to suppose that the two principles came into operation at a given moment, and not before. And since these principles are, on the hypothesis, ultimate, there can be nothing to determine them to begin to act at that point, rather than another. In this way we shall be reduced, as before, to suppose an event to happen in time without antecedents and without cause, a solution which cannot be accepted as satisfactory.

Shall we succeed better on the supposition that the forces which work for and against rationality are exactly balanced? In the first place we should have to admit that the odds against this occurring were infinity to one. For the two forces are, by the hypothesis, absolutely independent of one another. And, therefore, we cannot suppose any common influence acting on both of them which should tend to make their forces equal, or any relationship between them which should bring about this result. The equilibrium could only be the result of mere chance, and the probability of this producing infinitely exact equilibrium would be infinitely small. And the absence of any *a priori* reason for such an equilibrium could not, of course, be supplied by empirical observation. For the equilibrium would have to extend over the whole universe, and we cannot carry our observations so far.

Nor can we support the theory by the consideration that it, and no other, will explain the undoubted coexistence of the rational and the irrational in our present world. For it fails to account for the facts. It fails to explain the existence of change – at any rate of that change which leaves anything more or less rational, more or less perfect, than it was before. It is a fact which cannot be denied that sometimes that which was good becomes evil, and sometimes that which was evil becomes good. Now, if the two principles are exactly balanced, how could such a change take place? Of course we cannot prove that the balance between the two forces does not remain the same, if we consider the whole universe. Every movement in the one direction, in one part of the whole, may be balanced by a corresponding move in the other direction somewhere else. As we do not know the entire universe in detail, it is quite impossible for us to refute this. But this will not remove the difficulty. We have two principles whose relations to one another are constant. Yet the facts around us, which are manifestations of these two principles, and of these two principles only, are constantly changing. If we are to take time and change as ultimate facts, such a contradiction seems insuperable. On the other hand, to deny the ultimate validity of time and change commits us to the series of arguments, the failure of which first led us to doubt Hegel's position. If time could be viewed as a manifestation of the timeless, we need not have abandoned monism, for the difficulty of imperfection could then have been solved. On the other hand, if time cannot be viewed in this way, the contradiction between the unchanging relation of the principles and the constant change of their effects appears hopeless.

There remains only the theory that the world is exclusively the product of a principle which regards neither rationality nor irrationality, but is directed to some aim outside them, or to no aim at all. Such a theory might account, no doubt, for the fact that the world is not a complete and perfect manifestation either of rationality or of irrationality. But it is hardly exaggerated to say that this is the only fact about the world which it would account for. The idea of such a principle is contradictory. We can have no conception of its operation, of its nature, or even of its existence, without bringing it under some predicates of the reason. And if this is valid, then the principle is, to some extent at least, rational. Even this would be sufficient to destroy the theory. And, besides this, we should have to refute the detail of Hegel's dialectic before we could escape the conclusion that, if any categories of reason can be predicated of any subject, we are bound to admit the validity of the Absolute Idea of the same subject matter, so that whatever is rational in part must be rational completely.

It would seem, then, that any other system offers as many obstacles to a satisfactory explanation of our difficulty as were presented by Hegel's

theory. Is the inquirer then bound to take refuge in complete scepticism, and reject all systems of philosophy, since none can avoid inconsistencies or absurdities on this point? This might perhaps be the proper course to pursue, if it were possible. But it is not possible. For every word and every action implies some theory of metaphysics. Every assertion or denial of fact – including the denial that there is any certain knowledge at all – asserts that something is certain. And to assert this, and yet to reject all ultimate explanations of the universe, is a contradiction at least as serious as any of those into which we were led by our attempt to explain away imperfection in obedience to the demands of Hegel's system.

We find then as many, and as grave, difficulties in our way when we take up any other system, or when we attempt to take up no system at all, as met us when we considered Hegel's theory, and our position towards the latter must be to some degree modified. We can no longer reject it, because it appears to lead to an absurdity, if every possible form in which it can be rejected involves a similar absurdity. At the same time we cannot possibly acquiesce in an unreconciled contradiction. Is there any other course open to us?

We must remark, in the first place, that the position in which the system finds itself, though difficult enough, is not a *reductio ad absurdum*. When an argument ends in such a reduction, there can never be any hesitation or doubt about rejecting the hypothesis with which it started. It is desired to know if a certain proposition is true. The assumption is made that the proposition is true, and it is found that the assumption leads to a contradiction. Thus there is no conflict of arguments. The hypothesis was made, not because it had been proved true, but to see what results would follow. Hence there is nothing to contradict the inference that the hypothesis must be false, which we draw from the absurdity of its consequences. On the one side is only a supposition, on the other ascertained facts.

This, however, is not the case here. The conclusion, that the universe is timelessly perfect, which appears to be in conflict with certain facts, is not a mere hypothesis, but asserts itself to be a correct deduction from other facts as certain as those which oppose it. Hence there is no reason why one should yield to the other. The inference that the universe is completely rational, and the inference that it is not, are both deduced by reasoning from the facts of experience. Unless we find a flaw in one or the other of the chains of deduction, we have no more right to say that Hegel's dialectic is wrong because the world is imperfect than to deny that the world is imperfect because Hegel's dialectic proves that it cannot be so.

It might appear at first sight as if the imperfection of the world were an immediate certainty. But in reality only the data of sense, upon which, in the last resort, all propositions must depend for their connection with

reality, are here immediate. All judgments require mediation. And, even if the existence of imperfection in experience were an immediate certainty, yet the conclusion that its existence was incompatible with the perfection of the universe as a whole could clearly only be reached mediately, by the refutation of the various arguments by means of which a reconciliation has been attempted.

It is no doubt our first duty, when two trains of reasoning appear to lead to directly opposite results, to go over them with the greatest care, that we may ascertain whether the apparent discrepancy is not due to some mistake of our own. It is also true that the chain of arguments by which we arrive at the conclusion that the world is perfect is both longer and less generally accepted than the other chain by which we reach the conclusion that there is imperfection in the world, and that this prevents the world from being perfect. We may, therefore, be possibly right in expecting beforehand to find a flaw in the first chain of reasoning, rather than in the second.

This, however, will not entitle us to adopt the one view as against the other. We may expect beforehand to find an error in an argument, but if in point of fact we do not succeed in finding one, we are bound to continue to accept the conclusion. For we are compelled to yield our assent to each step in the argument, so long as we do not see any mistake in it, and we shall in this way be conducted as inevitably to the end of the long chain as of the short one.

We may, I think, assume, for the purposes of this paper, that no discovery of error will occur to relieve us from our perplexity; since we are not endeavouring to discuss the truth of the Hegelian dialectic, but the consequences which will follow from it if it is true. And we have now to consider what we must do in the presence of two equally authoritative judgments which contradict one another.

The only course which it is possible to take appears to me to be that described by Mr Arthur Balfour (*Defence of Philosophic Doubt*, p. 313). We must 'accept both contradictories, thinking thereby to obtain, under however unsatisfactory a form, the fullest measure of truth which' we are 'at present able to grasp'. Of course we cannot adopt the same mental attitude which we should have a right to take in case our conclusions harmonized with one another. We must never lose sight of the fact that the two results do *not* harmonize, and that there must be something wrong somewhere. But we do not know where. And to take any step except this would imply that we did know where the error lay. If we rejected the one conclusion in favour of the other, or if we rejected both in favour of scepticism, we should thereby assert, in the first case, that there was an error on the one side and not on the other, and in the second case that there were errors on both sides. Now, if the case is as it has been stated above, we have no right to make such assertions, for

we have been unable to detect errors on either side. All that we can do is to hold to both sides, and to recognize that, till one is refuted, or both are reconciled, our knowledge is in a very unsatisfactory state.

At the same time we shall have to be very careful not to let our dissatisfaction with the conflict, from which we cannot escape, carry us into either an explicit avowal or a tacit acceptance of any form of scepticism. For this would mean more than the mere equipoise of the two lines of agreement. It would involve the entire rejection, at least, of that one which asserts that the universe is completely rational. And, as has been said above, we have no right to reject either side of the contradiction, for no flaw has been found in either.

The position in which we are left appears to be this: if we cannot reject Hegel's dialectic, our system of knowledge will contain an unsolved contradiction. But that contradiction gives us no more reason for rejecting the Hegelian dialectic than for doing anything else. We are merely left with the conviction that something is fundamentally wrong in knowledge which all looks equally trustworthy. Where to find the error we cannot tell. Such a result is sufficiently unsatisfactory. Is it possible to find a conclusion not quite so negative?

We cannot, as it seems to us at present, deny that both the propositions are true, or deny that they are contradictory. Yet we know that one must be false, or else that they cannot be contradictory. Is there any reason to hope that the solution lies in the last alternative? This result would be less sceptical and destructive than any other. It would not involve any positive mistake in our previous reasonings, as far as they went, which would be the case if harmony were restored by the discovery that one of the two conclusions was fallacious. It would only mean that we had not gone on far enough. The two contradictory propositions – that the world was fundamentally perfect, and that imperfection did exist – would be harmonized and reconciled by a synthesis, in the same way that the contradictions within the dialectic itself are overcome. The two sides of the opposition would not so much be both false as both true. They would be taken up into a higher sphere where the truth of both is preserved.

Moreover, the solution in this case would be exactly what might be expected if the Hegelian dialectic were true. For, as has been said, the dialectic always advances by combining on a higher plane two things which were contradictory on a lower one. And so, if, in some way now inconceivable to us, the eternal realization of the Absolute Idea were so synthesized with the existence of imperfection as to be reconciled with it, we should harmonize the two sides by a principle already expounded in one of them.

It must be noticed also that the contradiction before us satisfies at any rate one of the conditions which are necessary if a synthesis is to be effected. It is a case of contrary and not merely of contradictory oppo-

sition. The opposition would be contradictory if the one side merely denied the validity of the data, or the correctness of the inferences, of the other. For it would then not assert a different and incompatible conclusion, but simply deny the right of the other side to come to its own conclusion at all. But it is a contrary opposition, because neither side denies that the other is, in itself, coherent and valid, but sets up against it another line of argument, also coherent and valid, which leads to an opposite and incompatible conclusion. We have not reasons for and against a particular position, but reasons for two positions which deny one another.

If the opposition had been contradictory, there could have been no hope of a synthesis. We should have ended with two propositions, one of which was a mere denial of the other – the one, that the universe is eternally rational, the other, that this is not the case. And between two merely contradictory propositions, as Trendelenburg points out (*Logische Untersuchungen*, vol. i, p. 44), there can be no possible synthesis. One only affirms, and the other only denies. And between simple affirmation and simple negation we can find nothing which will succeed in reconciling them. For their whole meaning is summed up in their denial of one another, and if, with their reconciliation, the reciprocal denial vanished, the whole meaning would vanish also, leaving nothing but a blank. Instead of having equally strong grounds to believe two different things, we should have had no grounds to believe either. Any real opposition may conceivably be synthesized. But it is as impossible to get a harmony out of an absolute blank as it is to get anything else.

Here, however, when we have two positive conclusions, which appear indeed to be incompatible, but have more in them than simple incompatibility, it is not impossible that a higher notion could be found by which each should be recognized as true, and by which it should be seen that they were really not mutually exclusive.

The thesis and antithesis in Hegel's logic always stand to one another in a relation of contrary opposition. In the higher stages, no doubt, the antithesis is more than a mere opposite of the thesis, and already contains an element of synthesis. But the element of opposition, which is always there, is always an opposition of contraries. Hence it does not seem impossible that this further case of contrary opposition should be dealt with in the same way as that which Hegel uses. Incompatible as the two terms seem at present, they can hardly seem more hopelessly opposed than any pair of contraries in the dialectic would seem before their synthesis had been found.

It is possible, also, to see some reasons why such a solution, if possible at all, should not be possible yet, and why it would be the last abstraction to be removed as the dialectic process rebuilt concrete realities. Our aim is to reconcile the fact that the Absolute Idea exists eternally in its full

perfection with the fact that it manifests itself as something incomplete and imperfect. Now it is only as a process, and consequently as something incomplete and imperfect, that the Absolute Idea becomes known to us. We have to grasp its moments successively, and to be led on from the lower to the higher. We cannot therefore become aware of any inadequacy which there may be in the idea of process, or of any synthesis which would reconcile that idea with the idea of eternal existence, except as the last stage in our comprehension of the universe. The gradual comprehension is itself a process, and to pass beyond that form must be impossible while any further steps remain to be taken.

I am not, of course, trying to argue that there is such a reconciliation, or that there is the slightest positive evidence to prove that there can be one. As I have tried to show, the eternal realization of the Absolute Idea, and the existence of change and evil, are, for us as we are, absolutely incompatible, nor can we even imagine a way in which they should cease to be so. If we could imagine such a way we should have solved the problem, for as this way would be the only chance of rescuing our knowledge from hopeless confusion, we should be justified in taking it.

All I wish to suggest is that it is conceivable that there should be such a synthesis, although it is not conceivable what synthesis it could be, and that, although there is no positive evidence for it, there is no evidence against it. And as either the incompatibility of the two propositions, or the evidence for one of them, must be a mistake, we may have at any rate a hope that some solution may lie in this direction.

In so far as we are certain that the arguments neither for the eternal perfection of the Absolute Idea nor for the existence of process and change are erroneous, we should be able to go beyond this negative position, and assert, positively the existence of the synthesis, though we should be as unable as before to comprehend of what nature it could be. We could then avail ourselves of Mr Bradley's maxim, 'what may be and must be, certainly is'. That the synthesis must exist would, on the hypothesis we are considering, be beyond doubt. For if both the lines of argument which lead respectively to the eternal reality of the Absolute Idea and the existence of change could be known to be, not merely unrefuted, but true, then they must somehow be compatible. That all truth is harmonious is the postulate of reasoning, the denial of which would abolish all tests of truth and falsehood, and so make all judgment unmeaning. And since the two propositions are, as we have seen throughout this paper, incompatible as they stand in their immediacy, the only way in which they can possibly be made compatible is by a synthesis which unites by transcending them.

Can we then say of such a synthesis that it may be? Of course it is not possible to do so unless negatively. A positive assertion that there was no reason whatever why a thing should not exist could only be obtained

by a complete knowledge of it, and, if we had a complete knowledge of it, it would not be necessary to resort to indirect proof to discover whether it existed or not. But we have, it would seem, a right to say that no reason appears why it should not exist. If the Hegelian dialectic is true (and if it were not, our difficulty would not have arisen), we know that predicates which seem to be contrary can be united and harmonized by a synthesis. And the fact that such a synthesis is not conceivable by us need not make us consider it impossible. Till such a synthesis is found it must always appear inconceivable, and that it has not yet been found implies nothing more than that the world, considered as a process, has not yet worked out its full meaning.

But we must admit that the actual result is rather damaging to the prospects of Hegelianism. We may, as I have tried to show, be sure that, if Hegel's dialectic is true, then such a synthesis must be possible, because it is the only way of harmonizing all the facts. At the same time, the fact that the dialectic cannot be true unless some synthesis which we do not know, and whose nature we cannot even conceive, relieves it from an obstacle which would otherwise be fatal, certainly lessens the chance that it is true, even if no error in it has yet been discovered. For our only right to accept such an extreme hypothesis lies in the impossibility of finding any other way out of the dilemma. And the more violent the consequences to which an argument leads us, the greater is the antecedent probability that some flaw has been left undetected.

Not only does such a theory lose the strength which comes from the successful solution of all problems presented to it, but it is compelled to rely, with regard to this particular proposition, on a possibility which we cannot at present fully grasp, even in imagination, and the realization of which would perhaps involve the transcending of all discursive thought. Under these circumstances it is clear that our confidence in Hegel's system must be considerably less than that which was possessed by its author, who had not realized the tentative and incomplete condition to which this problem inevitably reduced his position.

The result of these considerations, however, is perhaps on the whole more positive than negative. They can scarcely urge us to more careful scrutiny of all the details of the dialectic than would be required in any case by the complexity of the problems which the latter presents. And, on the other hand, they do supply us, as it seems to me, with a ground for believing that neither time nor imperfection forms an insuperable objection to the dialectic. If the latter is not valid in itself, we shall in any case have no right to believe it. And if it is valid in itself, we shall not only be entitled, but we shall be bound, to believe that one more synthesis remains as yet unknown to us, which shall overcome the last and most persistent of the contradictions inherent in appearance.

**Extract from *The Philosophical Theory of the State*
(1899)**

Bernard Bosanquet

The analysis of a modern state. Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*

1. We are about to analyse a modern state into groups of facts which are also ways of thinking. And a question may arise in what sense the connection is to be understood which will be alleged to bind together these groups of facts or points of view. When it is urged that group *b* or view *b* is suggested and made necessary by the shortcomings of group *a* or view *a*, does this imply that group *a* or its idea came into existence first, and group *b* or the notion of it sprang up subsequently or as an effect of the former? And could such a relation be reasonably maintained as between the component parts of a unity like the state?

An answer may be indicated as follows. We are dealing, in society and in the state, with an *ideal fact*. As a fact, a form of life, society has always been a many-sided creature, meeting the varied needs of human nature by functions no less varied. As an ideal fact, however, its advance has partaken of the nature of theoretical progress. In the continuous attempt to deal satisfactorily with the needs of intelligent beings, the mind, the intelligent will, has thrown itself with predominant interest now into one of its functions and now into another. And this has not been a chance order of march. Obviously, what it has emphasized and modified in the second place has depended both positively and negatively on what it had emphasized and modified in the first place. Positively, because when one step is thoroughly secured the next may be definitely attempted. Negatively, because the definite attainment of one step exposes the limitations of what has been achieved, and the need for another. At every stage the will is dissatisfied with the expression of itself which it has created. Till some public order has been established, morality can hardly

find expression; but when a legal system is thoroughly in force it becomes apparent how far the letter may fall short of the spirit. We see the same action of intelligence in pure theory. Every conquest of science leads to a new departure. It suggests it by its success, and demands it by its failure.

Now, in science it may or may not be the case that the connection which has led to a discovery enters permanently as a discernible factor into the structure of knowledge. The reorganization of experience may sweep away the steps which led to it. But in the living fact of society that is not so. Its many sides are actual and persist, and the emphasis laid from time to time on the principle of each – for example on positive law, on family ties, on economic bonds – merely serves to accent an element which has its permanent place in the whole. Thus, there must always be family ties and economic bonds. But at one time everything tends to be construed in terms of kinship, at another time in terms of exchange. And the tendency means a difference of actual balance between the functions as well as a different theory. The positive and negative connection of elements like these, the true place and limit of each, is permanently rooted in human nature, but may be elucidated by the explicit logic of their attempt and failure to give the tone to the whole social fabric. It follows that the social whole grows, like a great theory, in adequacy to the needs which are its facts; and the dissatisfaction of the will with its own expression, in other words, the contradictions which practical intelligence is continually attempting to remove, becomes more like suggestion than flat contradiction – or change, as we say, becomes less revolutionary. It may seem to be a difference between the social whole and a scientific theory that the former, as it grows, creates new difficulties, by creating new and freshly contradictory matter, as in the social problems of civilization; while the latter, as we imagine, deals with an unchanging experience. But this distinction is less true than it appears, and the comparison with the growth of a theory will always throw light on the true nature of the will and its continuous effort to satisfy itself.

2. Right or law may be taken in the widest sense as including the whole manifestation of will in an actual world – ‘the actual body of all the conditions of freedom’,¹ ‘the realm of realized freedom, the world of mind produced out of itself, as a second nature’.² It is a merit of the German term *Recht*³ that it maintains the connection between the law and the spirit of law,⁴ and almost of itself prohibits the separation between positive law and will, custom or sentiment, which underlies such a theory as Austin’s.

This whole sphere of right or law, the mind as actualized in society and the state, naturally divides itself on the principle which has just been explained, into three connected groups of ideal facts or points of view. The first, or simplest and most inevitable, of these may be called the

'letter of the law' as we come upon it most especially in the law of property – Shylock's law – the sheer fact, as it seems, that the world is appropriated by legal 'persons'.

The second, obviously conditioned by the first both positively and negatively, may be described as the morality of conscience; the revolt of the will against the letter of the law, though this was its own direct expression of itself (for example, in taking things as property); and its demand to recognize as right nothing but what springs from itself as the good will.

And thirdly, there is the reality or concrete experience in which the two former sets of facts, or ideas, find their true place and justification – the completed theory, so to speak, which adjusts and explains the narrower views founded on one-sided contact with life. This is indicated to consist in 'social observance', or 'ethical use and wont'; the system of working mind where the true will appears as incarnate in a way of living. This, like the others, it must be remembered, is a fact, though akin to a theory. Not only does it explain and justify the other factors, but its existence has enabled them to exist, as theirs has also been essential to it. And yet each of the three, as one aspect of society which under certain influences may catch the eye, has at times claimed – is, indeed, constantly claiming – predominance, and has thus brought into relief its own defects and the need of the complementary ideas. We will speak of these moods of mind or kinds of experience in their order, expecting a further subdivision when we come to treat of the third.

3. 'Law', then, in the directest possible sense – the minimum sense, so to speak – is the hard literal fact that it is a rule of the world we live in for things to be appropriated by persons. This is the first or minimum change of the world from mere matter into the instruments of mind, and it is a necessary change. Things have no will of their own, and it is by having a will asserted upon them that they become organs of life. In the same way, it is by assertion in external things that the will first becomes a fact in the material world. Property is 'the first reality of freedom'.⁵ It is not the mere provision for wants, but the material counterpart of will. Contract belongs to this sphere, the sphere of property. It is an agreement of persons about an external thing – a 'common will', but not one 'general' or 'universal' in its own nature like that involved in the state. Thus, it is a confusion of spheres to apply the idea of contract to the state, for the state is an imperative necessity of man's nature as rational, while contract is a mere agreement of certain free persons about certain external things. The idea of the social contract is a confusion of the same type as that by which public rights and functions were treated as private property in the middle age. The attributes of private property are nothing more than the conditions of 'personal' existence, and absurdity results if they are transferred to functions of the state.

This phase or view of law as, in its letter, an ultimate and absolute rule may be illustrated, Hegel says, by the Stoic notion that there is only one virtue and one vice; by the Draconic conception that every offence demands the extreme penalty; and by 'the barbarity of the formal code of honour, which found in every injury an unpardonable insult'. It might also be illustrated by Austin's theory of law as a command enforced by a penalty; or by the theories which account for property simply by the fact of occupancy or of labour mixed with the thing. The common point of all these views is that they treat the law, not as a part of a living system,⁶ ultimately resting on the will to maintain a certain type of life, but as something absolute in its separateness, and equally sacred in all its accidents and inequalities.

Now, this emphasis and idea of law, being the exaggeration of a single and direct necessity, the necessity of order and property, may be called 'primitive' or barbarous, but it cannot, of course, be identified with the earliest state of social authority known to history or to anthropology. There we should probably find law undifferentiated from custom and from religious sentiment, and consequently, though rigid enough, not in any such one-sided absoluteness as we have been describing. All we can say is that this is the way in which law must come to be regarded whenever its living spirit is forgotten, and an unreal absoluteness is assigned to it; and this connection of principle verifies itself as a fact in recurrent historical phenomena, and in fallacies which perpetually reappear.

4. Within the whole fabric of right or realized will, the element which naturally asserts itself by antagonism to the letter of the law is the morality of conscience, conscientiousness, or the idea of the good will. It is connected with the letter of the law, as Hegel puts it, by the various degrees of wrong. The will, that is to say, finds itself at variance in or with⁷ the order of law and property which it has created as its direct and necessary step to freedom. Its realized theory, so to speak, is found to break down at a certain point, by being in contradiction with the needs which it was created to meet. *Summum jus, summa injuria*. We may object that the anti-legal will is simply wrong. This may be so, and again it may not be so. What the will has awakened to, whether right or wrong, is that it can acquiesce in nothing which does not come home to it as fulfilling its own principle. What so comes home to it is what it calls 'good', and it cannot accept any order or necessity which it cannot will as good, i.e. as satisfying its own idea.

When this phase of reaction is pushed to its logical extreme, we have the modern doctrine of my conscience and my pure will. It is the conflict of the inner self with the outer world, expressed in history through the Stoic and through some forms of the Christian consciousness (especially the Protestant consciousness), and in philosophy through the Kantian

doctrine of the good will, uttered in the famous sentence, 'Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world or out of it which can be called good without qualification except a good will.'⁸ Nothing is worth doing but *what* one ought, and *because* one ought.

The criticism to which this principle has been subjected is familiar to students of ethics. Its point is, in brief, that there is no way of connecting any particular action with the mere idea of a pure will. The forms assumed by evasions of this difficulty, which we fall into when we desire wholly to separate the inner from the outer, or the 'ought' from the 'is', are treated by Hegel with unsurpassable vigour and subtlety, as indeed the annihilating criticism of this conception is primarily due to him. The essence of the matter is that the pure will directed towards good for the sake of good, having no real connection with any detailed conduct, may be alleged by self-deception in support of any behaviour whatever, and out of this may spring the whole sophistry and hypocrisy of 'pure intention'. He makes the shrewd observation,⁹ which is still of interest, that the extreme Protestant doctrine of conscience may take the form of ethical vacuity or instability, and that this had in his time been the cause of many Protestants going over to Rome, to secure some sort of moorings, if not precisely the stability of thought.

Still, out of all this one-sidedness, there survives the permanent necessity that an intelligent being can acquiesce only in what enters into the object of his will. It is his will which affirms the aim to which his nature draws him, and he is absolutely debarred from reposing in anything which does not appeal to his will. The subjective will is the only soil on which freedom can be a reality.

So, within the general organism of right or realized free will, we have found two opposite groups of facts – for the aspirations of intelligent beings are facts – or tendencies or theories, which are connected by opposition, and yet are necessary to the expression of the same underlying need – the letter of the law, and the freedom of conscience.

5. Hegel's name for the third term, which, as he puts it, expresses the 'truth' of these extremes, may be rendered 'the ethical system', or 'the moral life', or 'social ethics'. It expresses 'the truth' of the extremes, as a good theory may express the truth of two one-sided views. Only, as we have said, it is a fact as well as a theory, and therefore is something which actually contains what these two views demand, and does the work which they, and the facts they rely on, exhibit as necessary to be done. This relation is not obscure or unprecedented. Every institution, every life, works as a theory, and either masters its facts or fails to master them; though not every theory is a life or an institution.

The German word which the above-mentioned phrases attempt to render is *Sittlichkeit*. The word takes its meaning from *Sitte*, which in common usage is equivalent to 'custom'. Hegel's use of the term, in his

later writings, as opposed to *Moralität*, and as indicating, in comparison with it, a fuller and truer phase of life, is an intentional declaration of war against the Kantian principle of the pure good will, and is the gist of Hegel's ethico-political view in a nutshell. The word would most naturally apply to the life of a community in which law, custom and sentiment were not yet very sharply distinguished. According to accepted views, the communities of ancient Greece, before they were stirred by the reflective movement which is associated with the names of Socrates and the sophists, would be examples of a disposition and order of life which the word *Sittlichkeit* might denote. And it was in the Greek communities, as is shown by the work which he sketched as early as 1802,¹⁰ that Hegel found this suggestion of a whole in which law and custom, duty and disposition, were absolutely at one. He subsequently modified the conception in accordance with the modern idea of freedom, by allowing a greater emphasis and relief to its component parts, and insisting (against Plato's *Republic*, for instance), on the principle of individual choice, initiative and property, as necessary to the complete communion of intelligent beings. As we have just seen, indeed, he introduces reflective morality or conscientiousness into the sphere of right, to represent the full nature of mind, which is only exhibited in a consciousness which pursues its aims of its own choice and for their own sake.

The ethical system, then, or social ethics, is put forward as the ideal fact which includes and does the work of both the literal law and the moral will, alike in practice and as a theory. It is the idea of freedom developed (i) into a present world, and (ii) into the nature of self-consciousness.

For (i), in the first place, the ethical system, or the ways of acting which make up social ethics, constitute a present and actual world. So far it partakes of the nature of the literal law and order, the system of property-holding, which, as we have seen, is all but a natural fact. Social Ethic, we might say, is a physical fact. The bodily habits and external actions of a people incorporate it. It transforms the face of a country, 'domesticating the untamed earth'.¹¹ Each individual has his own bodily existence in a determinate mode as a part of the ethical life of society. The rules and traditions of ethical living are, as has been said, 'the nature of things'. They are as hard, as 'objective' an order as 'sun, moon, mountains, rivers, and all objects of nature'.¹² Man lives according to them before he knows that he does so, and always, in a great degree, independently of knowing that he does so. As this group of facts, or considered from this point of view, the ethical system is the body of the moral world.

(ii) But it is also and no less the very nature of self-consciousness. It is as much a demand of man's intelligence or an inner and universal law as the 'pure will' itself.¹³ The difference between them is that the ethical

system is a *system*, a world, though from the point of view of will regarded as inner, that is to say, as something which is the motive and fulfils the demand of consciousness. Thus, it bears the character of a thoroughly systematized theory, as contrasted with the idea of a good will, which is a mere general point of view. And it is because of this systematic character that it is enabled to connect the individual or particular will with the universal spirit of the community. It is only in a system that a particular fact can be connected with a universal law, as the planetary motions are with the law of gravitation. The particular will, as we have explained above, is universalized by its relation to a systematic purpose which it partly implies and partly realizes. A man wishes for this thing or that thing, but not at any price. The reservations to which his wish is subject, by reason of other purposes and postulates of life, are known to him only in part; but if they could be stated in full, they would constitute the system of his life as realized in the universal life of the community. It is precisely analogous to the process which a common judgment of perception has to go through in becoming a scientific truth – the implications have to be stated in full, and the perception modified in accordance with them. And when this is done, we have no longer a fact, but a science.

Regarded from this point of view, as the substance of the individual will, the ethical system is the soul of the moral world.

In analysing the ethical system, we shall say nothing of 'duties' or 'virtues'. Duty is in each case what the relation requires – the attachment of the universal system of will to the individual life. Virtue is a habit of such action, considered as embodied in the nature of an individual. The idea of virtue and virtuousness is not, in Hegel's view, altogether suitable to the members of an ethical commonwealth. It belongs rather to a time of undeveloped social life, when ethical principles and the realization of them are ascribed to the nature of peculiarly gifted individuals. Virtue or excellence, to the Greek moralist, for instance, suggested doing something better than the average, or being in some way specially gifted, and it is still apt to indicate the desire to be something exceptional, and not simply to find yourself in genuine service. The meaning of the words today tends to narrow itself to certain special relations, and does not indicate that life of the member in the whole which is the essence of what we really value.

The ethical system, or the order of social ethics, then – the mind and conduct of the citizen in Christendom – may be regarded as affirming freedom in three principal aspects, necessarily connected, and supplementing one another. Outwardly these aspects are different groups of facts – different institutions; inwardly they are different moods or dispositions of the one and indivisible human mind.

Thus, Hegel's analysis regards the social whole or system of social ethics from three points of view. First, in respect of the family; second,

in respect of what he has entitled bourgeois society; and third, in respect of the political organism, or the state in the strict sense.

It is to be borne in mind that, like the three principal divisions in the sphere of right, these headings represent explicit theories of society, as well as groups of facts.

6. Beginning once more, within an ordered social sphere, at the ethical factor which stands nearest to the natural world, and has taken, so to speak, the minimum step into the realm of purpose and consciousness, we start from the family. As the family exists in a modern civilized community, it is something necessary to society and the state, but absolutely distinct from both.

It first (a) represents the *fact* of the natural basis of social relations, being the embodiment of natural feeling in the form of love, both as between the parents and as embodied for them in the children. It is in accordance with Hegel's general views of the meaning of a system that he sees this element of mind primarily represented by the family, as an organ preserved and differentiated *ad hoc*, and not, or not merely, distributed indefinitely throughout the community. Thus, the modern family represents for him a higher stage of civilization – an organ to a fuller embodiment of mind – than the clan or tribe, or, in short, than any form of community in which the *whole* bond of union rests on merely natural feeling, kindness, generosity or affection. In the nation, indeed, a tinge of natural affection, a colouring of unity by kinship, survives, just as feeling runs through the experience of the individual mind. But the distinctive character of the state is clear intelligence, explicit law and system, and so the natural basis of feeling, though necessary to be preserved and spiritualized, achieves these needs in the family as a special organ, and not in the state as such.

All those theories, therefore, which tend to assimilate the state to a family by a sort of levelling down of the former or levelling up of the latter (Plato's *Republic*, the phalanstery, paternal government, and the like) involve for Hegel a mere confusion of relations. They recognize an element which is essential to society, and may truly be said to be even its foundation. But they do not see its right place in the whole, and do not understand that in order to attain a stronger and deeper unity (which is, in short, a stronger and deeper mind) the different elements must be allowed a greater emphasis and relief, and their respective characteristics must not be slurred or scamped.

But (b), in the second place, the family is a factor in the rational whole, the state, though its function *par excellence* is that of the natural basis of society. Hence its nature and sanction are ethical – it rests neither on mere feeling on the one hand, nor on mere contract on the other. It has a public side, and the acceptance of a universal obligation by a declaration in explicit language (language being the stamp of the uni-

versal), in face of the community, is an essential part of marriage, and not a mere accident or accessory, as the votaries of feeling have urged. This view is aimed against the confusion which finds the sole essence of marriage in feeling. This is a perpetually recurring contention, represented in Hegel's day by Friedrich von Schlegel's *Lucinde*, which argues that the form of marriage destroys the value of passion. Hegel's analyses are everywhere directed against this inability to grasp the distinct sides of a many-sided fact.

(c) The ethical aspect of the family¹⁴ shows itself in the nature and organization of the household, as an institution embodying permanent interests and relations of the two persons who are its head, and as an organ of public duties in the bodily and spiritual nurture of the children. The permanent and equal relation of the heads of the household, involved in its nature as the ethical aspect of the family, implies monogamy, and it is the monogamous family alone which can count as a true element of the ethical order.

(d) The household, being the true and operative ethical organ which makes parentage into family, is the unit which demands to be respected and protected by the state against the less differentiated forms of consanguinity, such as the clan. The true family starts from marriage and the foundation of a household, and in the early development of law we find the state, with a just instinct, protecting the household against the clan, for example, by conferring the power of bequest. This power, though now it may imply a discretion mainly hostile to the family, presented itself in early law rather as a means of perpetuating the separate household as against the pretensions of the clan to interfere with its property.

Thus, the monogamous family is naturally and necessarily, to some extent, a unit in respect of property; the children, at least, being inevitably under tutelage and incapable of self-support, even if economic equality asserts itself as between husband and wife. This peculiar relation in respect of property is rooted in the unique nature of the household, as an organ for the guardianship of immature lives, and as a unity of feeling rather than of explicit thought. It is noticeable that progress tends to introduce the distinctions of property within its unity¹⁵ (though for children this can never go very far), and very slightly to introduce the relations of the family into the outside world. In so far as such distinctions come to be made, the nature and functions of the household being undisturbed, a somewhat higher intensity of ethical union is rendered necessary, and will no doubt assert itself.

7. When the man (or woman¹⁶) arrives at maturity and leaves the safe harbour of the family, he finds himself, *prima facie*, isolated in a world of conflicting self-interests. He has his living to make, or his property to administer. He is tied to others, in appearance, only by the system of

wants and work, with the elementary function which is necessary to it, viz. its police functions and the administration of justice.

It is this phase of social life, and the temper or disposition corresponding to it, which Hegel indicates by the expression bourgeois society.¹⁷ It presents itself to him as the opposite extreme of life and mind to that embodied in the family. It is an aggregate of families – for the units of the bourgeois society are heads of households – as seen from the outside, in the great system of industry and business, where a man has to find his work and do it. It is, in mind, the presence of definite though limited aims, calculation and self-interest.¹⁸

Bourgeois society is the aspect of the social whole insisted on by the classical political economy, by which, as an achievement in the way of reducing complex appearances to principles, Hegel was much impressed. It is, again, the view of society embodied in the conception of the purely police state, and its principle is confused with that of the state proper by one set of theorists, as that of the family is by another.

It is the peculiarity of Hegel's view – probably the most definitely original, as it is the most famous, of all his political ideas – to contend that this aspect of society, with the form of consciousness belonging to it, is necessary to a modern state. According to his logic, indeed, it is inevitable that every true whole shall have an aspect of 'difference', of breaking up into particulars.

The principle of the ancient state, as concentratedly expressed in Plato's *Republic*, was weak and undeveloped, and fell short of the true claims of intelligence,¹⁹ just because it dared not really let the individual go – let him assert himself as himself. 'Subjectivity' was a principle fatal to it. Not that there was an iron oppression in the states of antiquity. The individual was, for an onlooker, magnificently developed. His limitations were in him, and did not oppress him; but for all that, free choice and the career open to talents were not for him.

The modern demand – such is Hegel's conception – is harder and higher. The individual's life is not predetermined by his birth, but he is thrown face to face with economic necessity, which is a form of the universal end. He has to strip off his crudeness and vanity, and, of himself, mould himself into something which fulfils a want. This is a step without which there can be no true freedom – the giving one's self by one's own act a definite place in the region of external necessity, the 'becoming *something*', or attaching oneself to a definite class of service renderers. Thus, we are startled to find culture or education treated in general, and in respect of its indispensableness, under the head of the bourgeois society. For culture is the liberation from one's own caprices, and the acceptance of a universal task. It is a severe process, and therefore unpopular, but it is a necessary one if we are to have true freedom. The criticism that such a world and temper is the world and temper of

self-interest does not appeal strongly to Hegel. We shall have to treat of it more fully below.²⁰

It may be noted in passing that the insecurity of life, which may seem to attach to dependence on the vast system of wants and work, is more and more seen, as modern economic relations develop, not to be insecurity at all, except in so far as 'culture' in the form of industrial training is absent. There is, indeed, in modern life, nowhere any absolute and oyster-like stability. The highest stability to be anywhere attained is that due to fitness for service in the interdependent system of needs.²¹

Therefore, as Hegel saw, but in more ways than he saw, the system of bourgeois society – the economic and industrial world – is not a separate reality, but only an appearance within a larger system. The member of it is not so detached as he may seem, or think. He is within, and sustained by, the general life of the state, as the aims which are his motives in 'business' or industry are within and inseparable from the whole structure of his intelligence.

Thus, the world of bourgeois society – a world, on the whole, of cash nexus and mere protection by the state – has a structure or tendency of its own which brings it back by necessary steps to connection with the state proper or explicit and determinate social unity. It is, we must observe, posterior to the state in time. It is only within the state proper, and resting on its solid power, that such a world as that of bourgeois society could arise or be conceivable. Its priority to the state is, like that of the family, the priority of comparative narrowness or simplicity, of dealing with fewer factors, and, of representing human nature in a more special, though necessary, aspect. And for this very reason it could not exist by itself. It has not the many-sided vitality indispensable to anything which is to hold its own in the actual world.

The working of the bourgeois society, then, exhibits an inevitable connection with the state proper, and, so to speak, leads up to it.

In the first place, the economic world implies the administration of justice. In this, as involving a developed system of civilized law, there is an advance on the 'letter of the law' in its crudest and most barbarous acceptation. The system of law of a modern state is, and still more ought to be,²² a fairly reasonable and intelligible definition of the rights and relations of persons. By this determination the economic system of particular wants and services enters upon a first approximation, as it were, to a unity of principle. The law only professes, indeed, to *protect* property and exchange, but in doing so it unavoidably recognizes that the particular want has a general bearing; for the developed system of law only comes into existence to enable wants to be supplied, and takes its definite shape according to the system of wants. We may illustrate this first approximation to universality, which law confers upon the particulars of private interest, by a suggestive view which M. Durkheim has

propounded.²³ He has pointed out that the current formula for social change, 'from status to contract', has a subtler significance than is apt to be recognized. For contract is not really indeterminate, as if it arose *in vacuo* without a precedent. It runs in forms determined by social experience through law and custom; and thus the law, which professedly aims at protecting property and exchange, necessarily regulates them by the modes in which it chooses to protect them.

A more intimate relation to the state proper – to a definite principle, as we might say, of common good – grows out of the interests of bourgeois society which take the shape of what a German calls 'police and corporation', i.e. state regulation and trade societies.

The basis of state regulation is the emergence of aspects of common interest in the system of particular interests. The region of particular interests (supply and demand) has an accidental side, and the state has a right and a duty to protect the general good against accidental hindrances. On the whole, no doubt, the right relation between producer and consumer arises of itself, but miscarriages may occur which call for interference on behalf of the explicit²⁴ principle of the general good. The *general* possibility of the individual's obtaining what he wants is a public interest, and the state has a right to intervene with this end in view, both by execution of necessary public works, by sanitary inspection and the like, and by inspection and control of fraud in the case of necessary commodities offered for sale to the general public. For the public offer of goods in daily use is not a purely private concern, but a matter of the general interest. If indeed there were complete official regulation, there would be a risk of getting work like the Pyramids, that represented no private want at all; but yet, in the system of private wants, there is a public interest that demands vigilance.

A similar approximation of bourgeois society to the state is constituted by the 'corporation', which rests on the facts of class. Every member of the bourgeois society belongs by his vocation to a class, and this breaking up into classes is a consequence of the division of labour which prevails in the economic sphere, disguising the common good as private interest or necessity. But in the formation of classes society begins as it were to recover from the dispersion which private interest has occasioned. As a member of his class²⁵ or 'estate', the citizen acquires solidarity with his fellows, and his particular interest becomes *ipso facto* a common one. As a member of the class, again, he is, or ought to be, a member of his 'trade society' or 'corporation'. In this he finds his honour or recognition,²⁶ a definite standard of life (apart from which he is apt to assert himself by aimless extravagance, for want of a recognized respectability), a standard of work, insurance against misfortune and (as a candidate for admission) the means of technical education.

If the family is the first basis of the state, the classes or estates are the

second. The corporation or trade society is a second family to its members. It is the very root of ethical connection between the private and the general²⁷ interest, and the state should see to it that this root holds as strongly as possible.²⁸

'If', Hegel writes,²⁹

in recent days the 'Corporation' has been abolished, this has the significance that the individual ought to provide for himself. This may be admitted; but the corporation did not alter the individual's obligation to earn his livelihood. In our modern States the citizens have only a limited share in the universal business of the State; but it is necessary to permit the ethical human being a universal activity over and above his private end. This universal, which the modern State does not always provide for him, he finds in the 'Corporation'. We saw before that the individual providing for himself in the Bourgeois Society also acts for others. But this unconscious necessity is not enough; it needs the Corporation to bring it to a conscious and thoughtful social ethics. Of course the Corporation needs the higher superintendence of the State, or it would ossify, shrink into its shell, and be degraded into a wretched guild. But in and for itself the Corporation is no closed guild; it is rather the bringing of an isolated trade into an ethical connection, and its admission into a sphere in which it wins strength and honour.³⁰

8. The state proper, or political constitution, presents itself to Hegel as the system in which the family and the bourgeois society find their completion and their security. He was early impressed, as we have seen, with the beautiful unity of the ancient Greek commonwealths. And the first and last idea which governs his representations of the modern state is that of the Greek commonwealth enlarged as it was from a sun to a solar system. The family feeling and the individual interest are in the modern state let go, accented, intensified to their uttermost power; and it is out of and because of this immense orbit of its elements that the modern state has its 'enormous strength and depth'. It is the typical mind, the very essence of reason, whose completeness is directly as the completeness of each of its terms or sides or factors; and secure in the logical confidence that feeling and self-consciousness, the more they attain their fullness, must return the more certainly to their place in the reasonable system which is their very nature. As ultimate power, the state maintains on one side the attitude of an external necessity towards the spheres of private life, of the family and of the economic world. It may intervene by force to remove hindrances in the path of the common good, which accident and immaturity may have placed there. But, in its essence, the state is the indwelling and explicit end of these modes of living, and

is strong in its union of the universal purpose with the particular interests of mankind. It is, in short, the incarnation of the general or real will. It has the ethical habit and temper of the family as a pervading basis, combined with the explicit consciousness and purpose of the business world. In the organism of the state, i.e. in so far as we feel and think as citizens, feeling becomes affectionate loyalty, and explicit consciousness becomes political insight. As citizens we both feel and see that the state includes and secures the objects of our affections and our interests; not as separate items, thrown together by chance, but as purposes transformed by their relation to the common good, into which, as we are more or less aware, they necessarily pass. This feeling and insight are the true essence of patriotism. It is easier to be magnanimous than to be merely right, and people prefer to think of patriotism as a readiness to make great sacrifices which are never demanded. But true patriotism is the everyday habit of looking on the commonwealth as our substantive purpose and the foundation of our lives.

The division of functions in the state is a necessary condition of its rational organization. But, as Rousseau had insisted, it is altogether false to regard these separate functions as independent, or as checks on one another. There could be no living unity if the functions of the state were ultimately independent and negative towards each other. Their differentiation is simply the rational division of labour. The state is an image of a rational conception; it is 'a hieroglyph of reason'.

Sovereignty, therefore, resides in no one element. It is, essentially, the relation in which each factor of the constitution stands to the whole. That is to say, it resides only in the organized whole acting qua organized whole. If, for example, we speak of the 'sovereignty of the people' in a sense opposed to the sovereignty of the state – as if there were such a thing as 'the people' over and above the organized means of expressing and adjusting the will of the community – we are saying what is, strictly speaking, meaningless. It is just the point of difference between Rousseau's two views. We saw that Rousseau clearly explained the impossibility of expressing the general will except by a determinate system of law. But what he seemed to suggest, and was taken to mean, by popular sovereignty, was no doubt just the view which Hegel condemns. It is essentially the same question as how a constitution can be made. Strictly, a constitution cannot be made except by modification of an existing constitution. If, to put a case, you have a multitude new to each other in some extra-political colony, they must assume a constitution, so to speak, before they can make one. Law and constitution are utterances of the spirit of a nation.

The form of state which Hegel analyses is a modern constitutional monarchy, with an executive (ministers sitting in the chambers, as he is careful to urge) and chambers or estates representing the classes

developed in the civic community. Representation, he urges, is of bodies or interests rather than of masses of individuals, and the corporations or trade societies have also an important place directly, by their touch with the departments of the executive government.³¹ The general principle is, as indicated above, that the problems of connection between considerable particular interests and the universal interests of the community are, so to speak, prepared on the ground of the corporation and bourgeois society for a solution in the interest of the common good by the legislative and the executive government.

The logical division of power, in his language, is that the legislature has to establish universal principles, the executive has to apply these principles to particular cases, and the prince has to bring to a point the acts of the state by giving them, 'like the dot on the i', the final shape of individual volition.

The distinction of states into monarchy, aristocracy and democracy Hegel refuses to regard as applicable to the modern world. At best, it could only apply to the undeveloped communities of antiquity. The modern state is a concrete, and, according to its principle, all the elements of a people's life are represented in it as an indivisible unity.

A curious point is Hegel's insistence on the function of the personal head of the state. By a junction of the extremes, he connects it with the recognition of free individuality, which is usually regarded as the democratic principle of the modern world. There is no act, we may say in illustration, according to the modern idea of an act, if it is not done in the end by an individual, though in a developed political system the monarch's action may only consist in signing his name. It is at least remarkable to compare this view with the tendency to one-man government in the administration of the United States of America.

The state, then, is on one side the external force and automatic machinery implied in the maintenance and adjustment of the rights and purposes of the family and the bourgeois society as an actual life. On the other side, and most essentially, it is that connection of feeling and insight, working throughout the consciousness of individuals as parts in a connected structure, which unite in willing a certain type of life as a common good in which they find their own. It has the same content as that of religion; but in an explicit and rationalized form as contrasted with the form of feeling. Only the separation of Church and state, and the division of the Churches against one another, have made it possible for the state to exhibit its own free and ethical character in true fullness, apart from both dogmatic authority and anarchic fanaticism.

9. Publicity of discussion in the assembly of the classes or estates is the great means of civic education. It is not in the least true that every one knows what is for the good of the state, and has only to go down to the House and utter it. It is in the work of expression³² and discussion

that the good takes form by adjustment of private views to facts and needs brought to bear by criticism. 'The views a man plumes himself on when he is at home with his wife and friends are one thing; it is quite another thing what happens in a great assembly, where one shrewd idea devours the other.'³³

The free judgment of individuals based on the publicity of political discussion is 'public opinion'. In public opinion we have an actual existent contradiction. As public, it is sound and true, and contains the ethical spirit of the state. As expressed by individuals in their particular judgments, on which they plume themselves, it is full of falsehood and vanity. It is the bad which is peculiar, and which people pride themselves on; the rational is universal in its nature, though not necessarily common. Public opinion is a contradictory appearance, in which the true exists as false. It is no accident, but inevitable insight, that leads both of these characters to be proverbially expressed, as in *Vox populi, vox Dei*, contrasted with Ariosto's

Che'l Volgare ignorante ogn'un' riprenda
E parli piu di qual che meno intenda³⁴

or Goethe's

Zuschlagen kann die Masse
Da ist sie respektabel;
Urtheilen gelingt ihr miserabel³⁵

or the 'mostly fools' of Carlyle.

Now, as public opinion thus combines truth and falsehood, the public cannot be in earnest with both, i.e. both cannot be its real will. But if we restrict ourselves to its express utterance, we cannot possibly tell what it is in earnest with – *because it does not know*. Therefore, the degree of passion with which a given opinion is maintained throws no light on the question, on what points the public is really in earnest, in the sense of the 'real will'. This can only be known from the substantive reality, which is the 'true inwardness' of public opinion. This substantive reality, the true merits of any case, is not to be got by the study of mere public opinion as expressed, but when it is successfully divined and asserted, public opinion will always come round to it. If we ask how it is to be divined or known, we must go back to the analogy of a theory. The solution must be constructed so as to satisfy the real facts or needs, and the real facts or needs only become known in proportion as it is constructed, just as in scientific discovery. The man who can see and do what his age wills and demands is the great man of the age. Public opinion, then, demands to be at once esteemed and contemned; esteemed

in its essential basis, condemned in its conscious expression. It is, however, the principle of the modern world that everyone is allowed to contribute his opinion. When he has contributed it, and so far satisfied the impulse of self-assertion, he is likely to acquiesce in what is done, to which, he can feel, he has thrown in some element of suggestion or criticism.

10. In concluding this chapter, we will attempt to estimate the nearness of such an analysis of the state to the actual facts of life, admitting certain appearances against it, but rejecting pessimistic views which rest on false abstractions.

I will state the difficulties as they appeared to T. H. Green, a cautious and practical Englishman, well experienced in local politics and acquainted with different classes of men.

‘To an Athenian slave, who might be used to gratify a master’s lust, it would have been a mockery to speak of the State as a realisation of freedom; and perhaps it would not be much less to speak of it as such to an untaught and underfed denizen of a London yard with gin shops on the right hand and on the left.’³⁶ ‘It is true that the necessity which the State lays on the individual is for the most part one to which he is so accustomed that he no longer kicks against it; but what is it, we may ask, but an external necessity, which he no more lays on himself than he does the weight of the atmosphere or the pressure of summer heat and winter frosts, that compels the ordinary citizen to pay rates and taxes, to serve in the army, to abstain from walking over the Squire’s fields, snaring his hares, or fishing his preserved streams, to pay his rent, to respect those artificial rights of property which only the possessors of them have any obvious interest in maintaining, or even (if he is one of the “proletariate”) to keep his hands off the superfluous wealth of his neighbour when he has none of his own to lose?’ ‘A conception does not float in the air. It must be somebody’s conception. Whose conception, then, of general good is it that these institutions represent?’ ‘Is it not seriously misleading, when the requirements of the State have so largely arisen out of force directed by selfish motives, and when the motive of obedience to these requirements is determined by fear, to speak of them as having a common source with the morality of which it is admitted that the essence is to be disinterested and spontaneous?’

I have quoted these passages – the whole section should be carefully read – in order to state plainly a paradox which affects the theory of society from beginning to end. It continually shows itself in the pessimistic criticism of economic motive, political motive, and of everyday social motive.

The whole question really depends on our understanding of the relation of abstract and concrete. It is plain, as Green says, that the idea of a common good has never been the sole influence operative in the formation or maintenance of states. And, in as far as it has operated at all, it

has only done so in very imperfect forms. Green goes so far as to say that Hegel's account of freedom as realized in the state does not seem to correspond to the facts of society as it is, or even as, under the unalterable conditions of human nature, it ever could be; though, no doubt, there is a work of moral liberation, which society, through its various agencies, is constantly carrying on for the individual.

Now, the truth of these criticisms may be granted in the same sense in which we grant the imperfection of knowledge (as currently conceived) or of morality – imperfections not accidental, but inherent in each particular form of human experience. The conflict of interests, the failure to reconcile rights and the weight and opaqueness, so to speak, of law and custom to the individual mind are contradictions of the same type and due to causes of the same kind as those which arise in the world of ethics and of theory. And, though the new relations which spring up in society are perpetually resulting in new contradictions, there is no reason to compare the state unfavourably, in this respect, with morality or with science. The contradictions, in fact, are the material of organization.³⁷

Without differing profoundly from Green in theory, therefore, we venture to assign a greatly diminished importance to his criticisms. This is due in part to the growth of a more intimate experience, owing in some measure to his initiative, which seems to show the essentials of life to be far more identical throughout the so-called classes of society than is admitted by such a passage as that cited above about the dweller in a London yard.³⁸ It is due, further, and in connection with such experience, to the psychological conceptions developed in previous chapters, according to which the place of actual fear of punishment in maintaining the social system is really very small, while the place of a habituation, which is essentially ethical, is comparatively large. These suggestions, which lead us to lay decreasing stress on Green's criticism of Hegel, point wholly in the general direction of his own convictions, and we may finally meet the general difficulty, which expresses itself in pessimism, by considerations such as Green himself alleges in mitigation of his own criticism.

We may approach the matter in this way. The paradox is that if you scrutinize the acts which have made states, and which carry them on, or which go on under and within them, you will everywhere be able to urge that they spring from self-interest and ambition – not from a desire for the common good. How, then, can we say that the state exists for a common good? Hegel's large conception of a social fabric and the temper of mind which maintains it should have done something to meet this problem. But we may come a little closer to the precise difficulty.

Nothing is so fallacious as mere psychological analysis applied to the estimation of the purposes which rule a mind. In every act there is necessarily an aspect of the agent's particular self. One way or another

he is satisfied in it. So the pessimistic or superficial psychologist can always – not in some acts merely, but in all – discover a form of self-seeking. Life is a whole made up of particulars, and the universal is a connection within them, not another particular outside them; it is a mistake of principle to suppose that any act can be outside the tissue of aims, impulses and emotions which affect the sensitive self. Great purposes work through these affections and transform them, but cannot obliterate them without obliterating life. ‘There is nothing degrading in being alive.’³⁹ But there is a kind of eye which sees all these particulars apart from the substantive aims which give them their character, and treats them as if they were the sole determining motives of the agent. Hegel calls such a critic – he is thinking especially of historians – ‘the psychological valet, for whom there are no heroes, not because they are no heroes, but because he is only a valet’. On the whole, a man is what he does. If his series of actions has the root of the matter in it, it is wrong either for him to be deterred, or for a critic to carp, because they bring him gain or glory, or gratify him by activity and excitement. To shrink from particular occasions of action because one’s self may find satisfaction in them is to fall back into the mere general willing of the abstract good. And ‘the laurels of mere willing are dry leaves that never have been green’.

We may illustrate these ideas from the life of the ordinary members of states, and from the career of a great ruler or conqueror.⁴⁰

The life of an English labourer, for example, may concern itself with no such abstract ideas⁴¹ as are expressed by the words ‘state’ or ‘common good’. But, to begin with, he is a law-abiding citizen. He keeps his hands off others and their belongings by the same rule by which he expects others to keep their hands off him and his belongings.⁴² He recognizes fairness of bargaining, and is prepared to treat others fairly, as he expects them to treat him. He is aware of his claims, that is to say, as depending on something in common between himself and others; and if he does not practically admit any such community, ‘he is one of the “dangerous classes”, virtually outlawed by himself’.⁴³

So far he is a loyal subject only. If he is to have a fuller sense of a social good, he must either take part in the work of the state, or at least be familiar with such work, through interest in his fellows’ share of it, and in the organizations which connect his class interests with the public good. His mind must not merely work in its place in the social mind, but must be in some degree aware of the connection between its place and the whole – of the apperceptive structure to which it belongs. He must, in short, have touch with the connection which Hegel represents as that between the bourgeois society and the state proper. And this, in modern states, is in principle open to him.

And, further, he must have the feeling for his state which is connected

with the idea of home and fatherland. In a modern nation the atmosphere of the family is not confined to the actual family. The common dwelling-place, history and tradition, the common language and common literature, give a colour of affection to the everyday citizen-consciousness which is to the nation what family affection is in the home circle.

Thus, it is not true that either the feeling or the insight which constitute a consciousness of a common good are wanting to the everyday life of an average citizen in a modern state. It may seem full of selfish care, but this is only a narrow view. If we look at the spirit of the whole life we shall see that it is substantially dependent on the recognition of a good, and feels that dependence in concrete form.

And, second, to take the paradox in its extreme shape, in which the order of the state appears to arise out of the selfish ambition of the most unscrupulous of men. The contradiction may be stated in the form that the actions of bad men are 'over-ruled' for good. But this would mean that the 'psychological' critic or historian had first mis-stated the cause, and then had rectified his mis-statement by a meaningless phrase. The great ideas and causes which were advanced, for example, by the career of Napoleon owed neither their nature nor their existence to his selfish ambition. They did not, however, owe them to any non-human cause; to any operation of ideas otherwise than in the minds of men. They came into existence through the working of innumerable minds towards objective ends by the inherent logic of social growth, with various degrees of moral insight, and they were promoted by Napoleon's career in virtue of the common character which united his aims, in so far as they had a reasonable side, with the movement shaped by the ideal forces of the age. There is no reason to doubt, if we do not wilfully narrow our view of the situation, that a conception of good was as much operative in the cause as it is present in the effect – say, in the unity of Italy. We cannot attempt to deal with the problem of the existence of evil on the ground of ethical and political philosophy; and we are not concerned to deny or to minimize the presence of greed and selfishness as distorting forces in the minds of men, or in the organization of states. All that we needed to show was that what makes and maintains⁴⁴ states as states is will and not force, the idea of a common good, and not greed or ambition: and that this principle cannot be overthrown by the facts of self-interest in ordinary citizens, or of selfishness in those who mould the destinies of nations.

Notes

1. Hegel, *Philos. of Mind* (E. Tr.), p. 104. Cf. defs. quoted from Green, p. 203 above [not reprinted in this collection, R.S.]

2. *Rechtsphil.*, sect. 4.
3. Cf. the Greeks' idea of *nomos*.
4. See ch. ii above on Montesquieu and Rousseau.[Not reprinted in this collection. R.S.].
5. *Rechtsphil.*, sect. 41. Not, in its developed form, the first in time. Hegel lays stress on the fact that true, free property was hardly realized even in his own day.
6. See, for example, above, p. 232, how the idea of a *system* of rights may modify punishment [not reprinted in this collection. R.S.].
7. 'In it', when my will does not conflict with right as such, but claims the right in an object A to be mine and not yours – a civil dispute. 'With it,' when my will rebels, and by its act, so far as in it lies, denies and destroys the whole fabric of right, for example, takes the object A, without alleging a right to it – theft, a criminal offence; cf. p. 230 [not reprinted in this collection, R.S.].
8. Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik d. Sitten*, sect. 1.
9. *Rechtsphil.*, sect. 141.
10. The *System d. Sittlichkeit*. The *Rechtsphil.* was not published till 1817, in its earliest form. See Wallace, *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, p. 187.
11. Aeschylus, *Eumenides*, 14.
12. *Rechtsphil.*, sect. 146.
13. On all this portion of the subject, see Mr Bradley's essay, 'My station and its duties', in *Ethical Studies*.
14. Cf. Green's *Principles of Political Obligation*, p. 235.
15. Married women's property, protection of earnings of children, property assigned by understanding within household to young children.
16. Hegel would say only or chiefly the man, who is for him the natural earner and chief of the household.
17. *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft*. 'Society', Wallace points out, is here opposed to 'community', and indicates a looser phase of union.
18. Cf. the merchant in Wilhelm Meister's *Lehrjahre*, viii. 2. 'I can assure you that I never reflected on the State in my life. My tolls, charges, and dues I have paid for no other reason than that it was established usage' (cited from Wallace, *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, p. cci.).
19. 'Was not ideal enough' (Hegel, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, ii. 254). The 'notion' for him necessarily involves identity, differentiation, and reintegration; and in this respect the ancient state falls short of a true notion, while the modern realizes it.
20. See p. 134 below.
21. I may refer to *The Standard of Life*, by H. Bosanquet, essay on 'Klassenkampf'.
22. Hegel pleads strongly for codification.
23. *De la division du travail social*, 225ff.
24. The *explicit* idea of common good always belongs in Hegel to the state proper.
25. The term *Stände*, it must be remembered, has for a German the association of elements of the representative assembly; *états*, estates of the realm.
26. Cf. the English workman's phrase, 'a good tradesman', i.e. a competent member of his trade.
27. 'We can only say that these men, if they leave us, will bitterly regret it . . . The man who is so unselfish as to care nothing for himself or his fellow-men will soon find himself, as years creep over him, and grey hairs and glasses, completely

cut out' – Branch Trade Report (Birmingham) to National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives, January 1896.

28. Sects. 201 and 255. I omit Hegel's characterization of the classes, which has a good deal in common with theories which represent occupations as determining character. The contrast between agricultural and industrial or commercial life, between country and town, is of great importance in his view. He almost seems to confine bourgeois industrialism as such to the life of town-dwellers; though, again, ultimately the whole division into classes is characteristic of bourgeois society (cf. sects. 256 and 305).

29. Sect. 255.

30. It is obvious that this treatment of associations arising among classes in industry and commerce does not apply in principle exclusively to trade or professional societies. It would include, for example, friendly societies and Co-operative Societies, by which members of the economic world bind themselves together for help, recognition, and the assertion of their general interests.

31. Much as through inspectors and commissions the opinion of trade unions, friendly societies and Co-operators is elicited by our government departments with a view to legislation, independently of the House of Commons.

32. It is a remarkable point in English politics today that legislation is practically in the hands of the government departments. Bills are rejected or 'knocked about in Committee'; but the mass of organized knowledge necessary to initiate legislation in a complex society can hardly be found outside the gathered experience of an office which has continuity in dealing with the same problems. This tendency more than justifies Hegel's point of view. An act of the 'general will' has not only, as he said, to be moulded by running the gauntlet of public and critical discussion, but has even to be first drafted by the help of immense piles of experience, which the general mind does not possess, and could not deal with, but which, nevertheless, enable its typical wish and intention to be embodied in effective form.

33. *Rechtsphil.*, sect. 315.

34. 'That the ignorant vulgar reproves everyone, and talks most of what it understands least'.

35. 'The masses are respectable hands at fighting, but miserable hands at judging.'

36. *Principles of Political Obligation*, p. 8; cf. pp. 127ff.

37. Take, for instance, the chaos of the medical charities of London. It consists of endeavours to adjust help to needs, which endeavours are themselves unadjusted to each other. Thus, precisely as in the theoretical progress, the unadjustment of adjustments brings out ever new contradictions which demand readjustment.

38. Not much stress should be laid on an isolated expression of this kind, used in making clear the difficulties of a theory which on the whole he supported, and putting these difficulties, as was his custom, as high as possible. But it is worth noting that no one, who really knows the class thus rhetorically alluded to, fails to experience in them the same great relations and recognitions which make life worth living for more fortunate persons, and, as they feel very keenly, the experience is often more emphatic there than in the richer class. Probably, in fundamental matters, there is as large a proportion of persons untaught and bred up between temptations among the rich as among the poor.

39. *Rechtsphil.*, sect. 123.

40. Green, *Principles of Political Obligation*, sects. 121 and 128.

41. Although the literary class are liable very seriously to underrate the significance of forms of thought unfamiliar to them.

42. Habits, such as our habit of relying on security of life and property, are secondarily automatic, i.e. are very intimately connected with ideas. See chap. viii.

43. Green, *op. cit.*, sects. 121 and 128.

44. Aristotle's saying of the state, that it '*comes to be* for the sake of life, but *is* for the sake of good life', expresses in the first instance an apparent contrast between origin and purpose of states. But its real point is that the purpose is implied in the origin, for the state is natural, and in every 'natural' genesis its purpose is implied; and the origin is implied in the purpose, for the state, in the processes which maintain it, 'originates', i.e. renews its material basis, daily, and must do so in order to 'be'.

Nominalism versus realism, and What is meant by 'determined' (1868)

W. T. Harris and C. S. Peirce

Nominalism versus realism

[Harris] (We print below some strictures upon the position assumed in our last number with reference to M. Janet's version of Hegel's doctrine of the 'Becoming'. We hope that these acute statements which have been written, for the most part, in the form of queries will receive a careful reading, especially by those who have differed from our own views hitherto expressed. They seem to us the most profound and compendious statement of the anti-speculative standpoint as related to the Science of Pure Thought (*Prima Philosophia*) that we have seen. But for this very reason we are fain to believe that the defects of the formalism relied upon are all the more visible. We have endeavoured to answer these queries with the same spirit of candour that animates their author. Editor)

[Peirce] *Mr Editor of the Journal of Speculative Philosophy:*

I should like to make some inquiries in regard to your meaning in the paragraph beginning 'Being is the pure Simple', vol. i, p. 255.

I will begin by stating how much of it I already understand, as I believe. I understand that 'Being' and 'Nothing', as used by you, are two abstract, and not two general terms. That Being is the abstraction belonging in common and exclusively to the objects of the concrete term, whose extension is unlimited or all-embracing, and whose comprehension is null. I understand that you use 'Nothing', also, as an abstract term = nothingness; for otherwise to say that Being is Nothing is like saying that humanity is non-man, and does not imply at all that Being is in any opposition with itself, since it would only say 'Das Sein ist nicht Seiendes', not 'Sein ist nicht Sein'. By 'Nothing', then, I understand the abstract term corresponding to a (possible) concrete term, which is the logical

contradictory of the concrete term corresponding to 'Being'. And since the logical contradictory of any term has no extension in common with that term, the *concrete* nothing is the term which has no extension. I understand that when you say 'Being has no content', and 'Being is wholly undetermined', you mean, simply, that its corresponding concrete has no logical comprehension, or, at least, that what you mean follows from this, and this, conversely, from what you mean.

I come now to what I do not understand, and I have some questions to ask, which I have endeavoured so to state that all can see that the Hegelian is bound to answer them, for they simply ask what you mean, whether this or that; they simply ask you to be explicit upon points upon which you have used ambiguous expressions. They are not put forward as arguments, however, but only as inquiries.

1. Abstract terms, according to the doctrine of modern times, are only a device for expressing in another way the meaning of concrete terms. To say that whiteness inheres in an object is the same as to say that the object is white. To say that whiteness is a colour is the same as to say that the white is coloured, and that this is implied in the very meanings of the words.

But, you will undoubtedly admit that there is a difference between a hundred dollars in my pocket *being or not being*, and so in any other particular case. You, therefore, admit that there is nothing which is which is also not. Therefore, it follows that *what is* and *what is not* are mutually exclusive and not coextensive.

Since, then, you nevertheless say that the corresponding abstractions, Being and Nothingness, are absolutely the same (although you at the same time hold that it is not so at all), it is plain that you find some other meaning in abstract terms than that which other logicians find. I would, therefore, ask what you mean by an abstraction, and how you propose to find out what is true of abstractions.

[Harris] [Here we have stated, 1st, what our interrogator thinks he understands, in brief, as follows: (a) that Being and Nothing are two abstract, and not two general terms; (b) that Being belongs to the concrete term, whose extension is unlimited, and whose comprehension is null; (c) that Nothing means *Nothingness*, and belongs to the concrete term, whose extension is null.

At this point we will pause, in order to call attention to a vital misapprehension of the signification of Being, as we used the term. If Being were the abstraction corresponding to the concrete term, 'whose extension is unlimited and whose comprehension is null', Being would then signify *existence* (not the German *Seyn*, but *Daseyn*, sometimes called *extant Being*), i.e. it would signify *determined* Being, and not *pure* Being. If Being is taken in this sense, it is not equivalent to Nought, and there is no support

given to such an absurdity in any system of Philosophy with which we are acquainted. Therefore, whatever is based on this assumption falls to the ground. But the question may be asked, 'If the abstraction corresponding to the most general predicate of individual things is *existence*, by what process of abstraction do you get beyond this most general of predicates to a category transcending it?' We answer, by the simple process of *analysis*; let us try: in the most general predicate, which is *determined Being*, or *existence* – for all things in the universe are determined beings – we have an evident twofoldness (a composite nature), which allows of a further analysis into pure Being and determination. Now, pure Being, considered apart from all determination, does not correspond to any concrete term, for the reason that *determination*, which alone renders such correspondence possible, has been separated from it by the analysis.

As regards point (c), it is sufficient to remark that we did not use the term 'Nothing' for Nothingness, in the place referred to, but used the term '*Nought*', so as to avoid the ambiguity in the term 'Nothing', to wit: the confusion arising from its being taken in the sense of no thing, as well as in the sense of the pure void. In analysing 'determined Being', we have two factors: one reduces to pure Being, which is the pure void, while the other reduces to pure negation, which is likewise the pure void. Determination is negation, and if determination is isolated, it has no substrate; while on the other hand all substrates, or substrate in general when isolated from determination, becomes pure vacuity.

Hence it seems to us that the process of analysis which reflection initiates does not stop until it comes to the pure simple, which is the turning-point where analysis becomes synthesis. Let us see how this synthesis manifests itself: our ultimate abstraction, the pure simple, has two forms, pure Being and pure negation; they coincide in that they are the pure void. Neither can be determined, and hence neither can possess a distinction from the other. Analytic thought, which sunders the concrete, and never takes note of the link which binds, must always arrive at the abstract simple as the net result of its dualising process. But arrived at this point it is obliged to consider the *tertium quid*, the *genetic universal*, which it has neglected. For it has arrived at that which is self-contradictory. To seize the pure simple in thought is to cancel it; for by seizing it in thought, we seize it as the negation of the determined, and by so doing we place it in opposition, and thereby determine it. Moreover, it would, objectively considered, involve the same contradiction, for its distinction from existing things determines it likewise. Therefore, *the simple*, which is the limit of analysis, is only a point at which synthesis begins, and hence is a *moment* of a process of self-repulsion, or self-related negation. So long as analysis persists in disregarding the mediation here involved, it can set up this pure immediate for the *ultimatum*. But so soon as it takes it in its truth it allows its mediation to appear, and we learn the synthetic result, which, in its most abstract form,

is 'the becoming'. This we shall also find in another mode of consideration: differentiation and distinguishing are forms of mediation; the simple is the limit at which mediation begins; it (mediation) cancels this limit by beginning; but all mediated somewhats imply, likewise, the simple as the ultimate element upon which determination takes effect. Thus we cannot deny the simple utterly, nor can we posit it affirmatively by itself; it is no sooner reached by analysis than it passes into synthesis. Again we see the same doctrine verified by seizing the two factors of our analysis in their reflective form, i.e. in their mediation: Being, as the substrate, is the form of identity or self-relation, which, when isolated, becomes empty self-relation, or self-relation in which the negativity of the relation has been left out; this gives a form that collapses into a void. Determination, as the other factor, is the relation to a beyond, or what we call the *relative* proper; it is the self-transcending element, and when isolated so that its relation remains within itself, it falls into the form of the self-related, which is that of substrate, or the form of Being, and this collapses still further into the void, when we continue our demand for the simple; this void (or 'hunger', as Boehme called it) is the same relativity that we found determination to be, when isolated, and thus we may follow these abstractions round and round until we find that they are organic phases of ONE PROCESS. Then we have found our synthesis, and have left those abstractions behind us.

We do not pretend to speak for 'Hegelians'; we do not know that they would endorse our position. We give this as our own view, merely.

The first query which our interrogator offers contains the following points:

(a) Abstract terms are devices for expressing the meaning of concrete terms.

(b) Difference between a hundred dollars in his pocket being and not being (i.e. that the existence of a hundred dollars in his pocket makes a difference to his wealth) granted, it follows that what is and what is not are mutually exclusive, and not coextensive.

(c) The assertion of the identity of Being and Nothing [nought?] and the simultaneous denial of it indicate some other meaning given to abstract terms than the one he finds.

With regard to the first point, (a), we are ready to say at once that we could not hold such a doctrine and lay any claim to be speculative philosophers. Nor, indeed, could we consistently hold it and join the class of thinkers which belong to the stage of reflection – such as the positivists, the Kantists, the Hamiltonians etc., etc. – who agree that we know only phenomena, and hence agree that the immediate world is untrue in itself, and exists only through mediation. For it is evident that the doctrine enunciated by our querist implies that general terms as well as abstract terms are only *flatus vocis* – in short, that individual things compose the universe, and that these are valid and true in themselves. On the contrary,

we must hold that true actualities must be self-determining totalities, and not mere *things*, for these are always dependent somewhats, and are separated from their true selves. (See chapter VIII of our Introduction to Philosophy, and also chapter X on 'The universal'.) That which abides in the process of origination and decay, which *things* are always undergoing, is the generic; the generic is the total comprehension, the true actuality, or the Universal, and its identity is always preserved, while the mere 'thing', which is not self-contained, loses its identity perpetually. The loss of the identity of the *thing* is the very process that manifests the identity of the total.

Hence, to presuppose such a doctrine as formal logic presupposes is to set up the doctrine of immediateness as the only true.

The 'hundred-dollar' illustration does not relate to the discussion, for the reason that the question is not that of the identity of *existence* and *non-existence*, but of *pure Being* and *Nought*, as before explained.]

[Peirce] 2. You say, in effect,

Being has no determination;
Ergo, It is nothing.

Now, it certainly appears that the contrary conclusion follows from this premise, namely, that it is not nothingness. I suppose that you have suppressed one of your premises, and that you mean to argue thus:

Indetermination in respect to any character is the negation of that character;
Being is indeterminate in respect to every character;
Ergo, Being is negative of every character.

In short, you seem to imply that to abstract from a character is to deny it. Is this the manner in which your argument is to be completed, or how else?

3. This suggests another question. You say that nothing has no determination. It is plain that it would not follow from this that Being is nothing, but only that Nothing is being, or rather that any non-being is a being, thus reducing non-being (*nicht-seiende*) to an absurdity. This would be nothing new (for Albertus Magnus quotes Avicenna to this effect), and in my opinion would be perfectly true. *Non-ens*, or 'the not being', is a self-contradictory expression. Still, though I thus see no monstrous consequences of saying that nothing has no determination, I see no proof at all that it is so. It might be said, indeed, that the things which are not have no characters in common, and that therefore *what is not* has no logical comprehension and Being – not no determination. I would ask, then, have you proved that nothing has no determination? Do not suppose that I am endeavouring to drive you into contradiction; for I understand Hegelians profess to be self-contradictory. I only wish to ascertain

whether they have an equal disregard for those logical maxims which relate to ambiguities.

4. You say, in effect,

Difference is determination,
Being has no determination;
Ergo, Being has no difference from nothing;
Ergo, Being is nothing.

It is incontestable that difference from anything is determination in respect to being or not being that thing. A monkey, in differing from a man, is determined (negatively) in respect to humanity. Difference, then, in any respect, is determination in that respect. This, I take it, is what you mean. Now let us parallel the above argument:

Difference in any respect is determination in that respect;
Animality, in general, is not determined in respect to humanity;
Ergo, Animality, in general, has no difference from humanity;
Ergo, Animality, in general, is humanity.

This is plainly sophistical. For to say that an abstraction, in general, is undetermined has two different senses; one resulting from a strict analysis of the language, and the other reposing upon the ordinary use of language. Strictly, to say that an abstraction is undetermined would mean that it may be this or may be that abstraction; that is that the abstract word by which it is expressed may have any one of a variety of meanings. What is ordinarily meant by the phrase, however, is that the object of the corresponding concrete term is undetermined, so that neither of a certain pair of mutually contradictory predicates is *universally* true of that concrete. Now, it is true to say that animality is undetermined in respect to humanity, or that being is not determined at all, only in the latter of these senses, to wit: that not every animal is a man, and not every animal is not a man, and (in the other case) that there is no predicate which can be truly affirmed or denied of all beings. For in the other sense, we should imply that the abstractions themselves were vague, and that being, for example, has no precise meaning. In the only true sense, therefore, the premise is, in the one case, that 'Animal, simply, is undetermined', and in the other, that '*Ens (seiende)* is undetermined'; and what follows is, in the one case, that 'not every animal differs from a man', and in the other, that 'not every being differs from any nothing'. This latter amounts merely to saying that there is nothing from which every being differs, or that a nothing is an absurdity. These correct conclusions do not in the least imply that animality is humanity, or that being, is nothingness. To reach the latter conclusions, it would be necessary (in the first place) to use the premises in the other and false sense; but even then, all that would be legitimately inferable would be that 'humanity, *in some*

sense, is animality', and that 'being, *in some sense*, is nothing'. Only by a second fallacy could it be concluded that animality, in the sense intended, is humanity, or that being, in the sense intended, is humanity, or that being, in the sense intended, is nothing. Now, I would inquire whether you inadvertently fell into these ambiguities, or, if not, wherein the force of your argumentation lies.

[Harris] [The second point we are requested to answer is involved in the third and fourth, which charges to our account the following syllogism:

Difference is determination; Being has no determination; *ergo*, Being has no difference from Nothing; *ergo*, Being is Nothing.

This is then paralleled with one in which animality and humanity are confounded; the cause of which is the following oversight: in the article under criticism (vol. i of the present journal, p. 255,) we said, 'Thus, if Being is posited as having validity in and by itself, without determination, it becomes a pure void, is nowise different from nought, for difference is determination, and [N.B.] neither Being nor nought possess it.' The ground of their identity is stated to be the lack of determinations in nought as well as in Being.

Again, determination may be quantitative as well as qualitative, and, in the former respect, animality is distinguished from humanity; for to have more extension and less comprehension certainly distinguishes one concept from another. Two is distinct from three, although contained in the latter. Hence, it is not quite correct to say that 'animality, in general, is not determined in respect to humanity'. Moreover, if it were correct, its converse, 'humanity is not determined in respect to animality', would also have to be true to make a case parallel to the one in which Being is asserted to be identical with Nothing for the reason that neither is determined in any respect. Were animality and humanity neither determined in respect to the other, they certainly must be identical.

For these reasons, we cannot acknowledge that we 'inadvertently fell into these ambiguities', or that we fell into them at all.

And we cannot see the basis of the assertion that 'Hegelians profess to be self-contradictory'. For they hold that finite things contradict themselves, but that the total preserves itself in its negation. They therefore would consider everyone who stakes his faith on the immediate to contradict himself, but that the philosopher who holds only to the absolute mediation escapes self-contradiction by not attempting to set up non-contradiction as the first principle of things. Hegelians may understand this as they please – to us it seems that the principle of identity is abstract, and only one side of the true principle. If we would comprehend the true principle of the universe, we must be able to seize identity and contradiction in one, and hence to annul both of them. He who comprehends self-determination must be able to do this. The self negates itself, and yet,

for the reason that it is the self that does this, the deed is *affirmative*, and hence identity is the result. 'The self says to itself, "thus far shalt thou go, and no further"; its reply is, "I am already there, limiting myself." ' 'When me they fly, I am the wings', says Brahma, and every true Infinite involves this negation, which is at the same time negation of negation or affirmation.

Hence, it seems to us improper to charge self-contradiction upon those who merely assert it of finite things.]

[Peirce] 5. Finally, I would inquire whether, in your opinion, the maxims of (ordinary) logic relating to contradictions lack even a *prima facie* presumption in their favour; whether the burden of proof is or is not upon the Hegelians to show that the assumption of their falsity is a more tenable position than the assumption of their truth. For in the present state of the question, it seems to me more probable that subtle fallacies lurk in the Hegelian reasoning than that such fallacies lurk in all other reasoning whatsoever.

[Harris] [In answer to the fifth query, we will state that we think the maxims of formal logic are *prima facie* true, for the *prima facie* mode of viewing always gives validity to the immediate phase of things. But reflection discovers the insufficiency of abstract identity and difference, and comes to their assistance with manifold saving clauses. The speculative insight holds, too, like reflection, that mediation belongs to things, but sees, further, that all mediation is circular, and hence, that self-mediation is the 'constant' under all variables.

The whole question of the validity of formal logic and of common sense versus speculative philosophy can be reduced to this: do you believe that there are any finite or dependent beings? In other words, are you a nominalist or a realist?

This is the gist of all philosophizing: if one holds that things are not interdependent, but that each is for itself, one will hold that general terms correspond to no object, and may get along with formal logic; and if one holds that one knows things directly in their essence, one needs no philosophy – common sense is sufficient.

But if one holds that any particular thing is dependent upon what lies beyond its immediate limits, one holds, virtually, that its true being lies beyond it, or, more precisely, that its immediate being is not identical with its total being, and hence, that it is in contradiction with itself, and is therefore *changeable*, *transitory* and *evanescent*, regarded from the *immediate* point of view. But regarding the entire or total being (the generic), we cannot call it changeable or contradictory, for that perpetually abides. It is the 'Form of Eternity.')

What is meant by 'Determined'

[Harris] (The following discussion, which is a continuation of the one in a former issue called 'Nominalism and realism', may serve a good purpose to clear up any confusion that may exist regarding some of the important technical expressions employed. Editor.)

[Peirce] *To the Editor of the Journal of Speculative Philosophy:*

Sir: Your remarks upon my inquiries concerning Being and Nothing are very kind and courteous. Considered as replies, they are less satisfactory than they might have been had I succeeded better in making my difficulties understood.

I suspect that there must be some misunderstanding between us of the meaning of the various terms cognate with 'determined'. Perhaps, therefore, I shall do well to state more fully than I did before the manner in which I understand Hegel (in common with all other logicians) to use them. Possibly, the original signification of *bestimmt* was 'settled by vote'; or it may have been 'pitched to a key'. Thus its origin was quite different from that of 'determined'; yet I believe that as philosophical terms their equivalence is exact. In general, they mean 'fixed to be *this* (or *thus*), in contradistinction to being this, that or the other (or in some way or other)'.¹ When it is a concept or term, such as is expressed by a concrete noun or adjective which is said to be more determinate than another, the sense sometimes is that the logical extension of the former concept or term is a part and only a part of that of the latter; but more usually the sense is that the logical comprehension of the latter is a part and only a part of that of the former.

In my former letter (pp. 145–6) I sufficiently expressed my own understanding of 'determined' as applied to a concept or term such as is expressed by an abstract noun. 'Determinate' is also used either in express application or with implicit reference to a second intention or term of second denomination. In such an acceptance, we may speak either of a singular as indeterminate, or of a conception of Being, in general, as determinate. Every singular is in one sense perfectly determinate, since there is no pair of contradictory characters of which it does not possess one. Yet if the extension of the term be limited, not by additions to its comprehension, but *by a reflection upon the term itself* – namely, that it shall denote but one – it is called an indeterminate singular. In this sense, 'some one horse' is an indeterminate individual, while 'Dexter' is a determinate individual. In a somewhat similar way, every universal conception of Being is quite indeterminate in the sense of not signifying any particular character. Yet, if the reflection is explicitly made (*gesetzt*) that every thing to which it applies has its particular characters, it is called by Hegel *determinate being*. Hegel teaches that the whole series

of categories or universal conceptions can be *evolved* from one – that is from *Seyn* – by a certain process, the effect of which is to make actually thought that which was virtually latent in the thought. So that this reflection which constitutes *Daseyn* lies implicitly even in *Seyn*, and it is by *explicitly* evolving it from *Seyn* that *Daseyn* is evolved from *Seyn* (Hegel's *Werke*, Bd 3, S. 107). The term 'What is' has reference to pure *Seyn* only; the term 'What is somehow' has reference to *Daseyn*.

This is my understanding of the term 'determinate'. It must differ from yours, or you would not say that animality, *in general*, is determined in respect to humanity: so when you say that were animality and humanity, in general, undetermined with respect to each other they would be identical, I take the example of 'highness of pitch in general' and 'loudness of sound in general', and I conclude again that we are taking the word 'determined' in different senses. May I ask you to reperuse my 4th question (p. 145)?

You have apparently understood me as applying the term 'abstract' to any concept [that is] the result of abstraction. But, as I intimated (p. 141), I adopt that acceptation in which 'whiteness' is said to be abstract and 'white' concrete. For this use of the terms, I refer to the following authorities: Andrews and Stoddard's *Latin Grammar*, §26, 5; Scotus, *Super Praedicamenta*, qu. 8; Durandus à Sancto Porciano, *In Sentent.*, lib 1, dist. 34, qu. 1; Ockham, *Summa Logices*, pars 1, cap. 5; Chauvin, *Lexicon Rationale*, sub. v. *Abstractum*; Mill, *Logic*, Bk 1, cap. 2, §4; Trendelenburg, *Elementa Logices Arist.*, 6th edn., p. 117, note; Überweg, *Logik*, §51 (where Wolff, also, is cited); Hoppe, *Logik*, §§256, 257. This misapprehension affects the relevancy of most of your remarks.

I think that I have not, as you suppose, greatly mistaken the sense in which Hegelians use the term 'Pure Being'. At least, my definition seems to be in accord with the explanations of almost all, if not all, the commentators and expositors of Hegel. I would submit respectfully, that your own remarks upon p. 117 of Vol. 1 of this journal contradict, almost in terms, what you say (p. 141) in reply to me.²

Once or twice you use such expressions as 'We do not profess to speak for Hegelians', 'Hegelians may understand this as they please' etc. Have I been wrong then, in supposing that the passage to which my queries related was a professed defence of Hegelian doctrine?³

I am sorry to learn that I have done you injustice in saying that you profess to be self-contradictory. Yet I do not see in what sense you object to the remark. To say that a *man* is self-contradictory is, of course, but a way of saying that what he believes is self-contradictory. You believe that 'finite things contradict themselves'; that is, as I understand it, that contradictions exist. Therefore, what you believe in appears to be self-contradictory. Nor can I see how a person 'escapes self-contradiction by

not attempting to set up non-contradiction as the first principle of things'; that is by not professing to be otherwise than self-contradictory.⁴

I do not see that you notice query 3.⁵

Notes

[Harris] 1. Wherein is the force of this 'in contradistinction to' which our correspondent employs here? 'Determination' – as we understand the Hegelian use of the term – implies all difference, property, mark, quality, attribute or, in short, any distinction whatever that is thought as belonging to a subject. This would include its 'being this, that or the other'. Thus 'highness of pitch' and 'loudness of sound, in general,' are through their determinateness distinct. Editor.

[Harris] 2. The passage here referred to is in chapter III of the 'Introduction to Philosophy', wherein there is no reference whatever to the Hegelian use of the term. It is a psychological investigation of the significance of the first predicate which is a determinate somewhat, and 'Being' is used in the popular sense of 'something' (i.e. *a* being), and its origin traced to the substantive-making activity of the Ego, which in its first exercise seizes itself as the fundamental basis of all. Just as, according to Kant, Time and Space, the forms of the mind, are made the basis of what the mind sees; so, too, Being as a universal predicate is the pure activity objectified. But *the making it substantive*, at the same time, determines it.

[Harris] 3. Of course, our correspondent would not consider 'a defence of Hegel' as identical with a championship of the Hegelians. It is the latter, only, that we object to, for the reason mentioned in the article on Janet, viz. that the term is used so vaguely as to include those who differ essentially from Hegel.

[Harris] 4. We hasten to assure our correspondent that we do not 'believe in the self-contradictory'. We are sorry we were *so* unhappy in our expressions as to convey such a meaning. The *Abiding* or the Total Process is not self-contradictory, neither is it an abstract identity, but is (as we described it on p. 54, 2d col. of this volume) [not reprinted here. R.S.] 'self-identical through self-distinction'. The self-determining is what we believe in, and it alone exists, while the fleeting show whose reality rests on contradiction is (and this is not Hegelian merely, but older than Plato) a mingling of Being and non-Being. One who sets up the principle of contradiction ignores one side of the process, and thus involves himself in that which he tries to avoid.

[Harris] 5. If any point is involved in question 3d that is not answered in the discussion of the other queries, we fail to seize it.

Kant and philosophic method (1884)

John Dewey

On its subjective side, so far as individuals are concerned, philosophy comes into existence when men are confronted with problems and contradictions which common sense and the special sciences are able neither to solve nor resolve. There is felt the need of going deeper into things, of not being content with haphazard views or opinions derived from this or that science, but of having some principle which, true on its account, may also serve to judge the truth of all besides. It is no matter of accident that modern philosophy begins, in Descartes, with a method which doubts all, that it may find that wherewith to judge all; nor is it meaningless that Kant, the founder of modernist philosophy, commences his first great work with a similar demand, and 'calls upon Reason to undertake the most difficult of tasks, self-knowledge, and establish a tribunal to decide all questions according to its own eternal and unchangeable laws'.¹ This self-knowledge of Reason, then, is the method and criterion which Kant offers.

Before we may see what is involved in this, it is necessary to see what in gist the previous methods had been, and why they had failed. The method of 'intellectualism' begun by Descartes and presented to Kant through Wolff was (in one word): analysis of conceptions, with the law of identity or non-contradiction for criterion. To discover the truth is to analyse the problem down to those simple elements which cannot be thought away, and reach a judgment whose predicate may be clearly and distinctly seen to be identical with its subject. Analytic thought, proceeding by the law of identity, gives the method for philosophic procedure. Now, Kant in his pre-critical period² had become convinced that analysis does not explain such a conception as that which we have of causation: 'How one thing should arise out of another, when it is not connected with it, according to the law of identity, this is a thing which I should much like to have explained.'³ Nor again, while it may be, and undoubt-

edly is, the method for pure thought, does it give any means for passing from thought to existence. This, he would say, is no predicate of anything; it is part of no conception, and can be got by no analysis. Reality is added to our notions from without, not evolved from them. But, if logical thought is not adequate to such notions as cause, or able to reach existence, it can be no method for discovering absolute truth.

So Kant finds himself thrown into the arms of the empiricists. It is experience which shows us the origin of an effect in a cause, and experience which adds reality or existence to our thoughts. What, then, is the method of 'empiricism'? Beginning with Bacon, at first it merely asserted that the mind must be freed from all subjective elements, and become a mirror, to reflect the world of reality. But this, as criterion, is purely negative, and required the positive complement of Locke. This method, in a word, is *Analysis of perceptions with agreement as criterion*. In contrast with the intellectual school, which began with conceptions supposed to be found ready-made in the human mind, it begins with the perceptions impressed upon that blank tablet, the mind, by external objects, and finds 'knowledge to consist in the perception of the connection or agreement or disagreement of these ideas'. But two questions arise: if truth or knowledge consists in perceptions, how, any more than from conceptions, shall we get to an external world? This question was answered by Berkeley in showing that, if knowledge were what this theory made it to be, the external world was just that whose *esse* is *percipi*. The second question is: what is agreement of perception? Agreement certainly means, as Locke said, 'connection', that is mutual reference, or synthesis. But how can this synthesis occur? The mind is a blank, a wax tablet, a *tabula rasa*, whose sole nature is receptivity, and certainly it can furnish no synthesis. Locke had avoided the difficulty by assuming that ideas come to us or are 'given' more or less conjoined – that one has naturally some bond of union with another. But this, of course, cannot be. Simple impressions or perceptions are, as Hume stated, such as admit of no distinction or separation, and these are the ultimate sensations. These have no connection with each other, except perhaps the accidental one of following or occurring together in time, and so it is that 'every distinct perception is a separate existence'. Necessary connection among them, therefore, there can be none. Sensations are purely contingent, accidental and external in their relations to each other, with no bonds of union. Any agreement is the result of chance or blind custom. Knowledge as the necessary connection of perceptions does not exist.

Kant consequently discovers, by a more thorough study of empiricism, that it too betrays him. It, no more than his former guides, can furnish him with a way of getting to an external world nor to knowledge at all. Nay, even self, some ghost of which was left him by the other method, has disappeared too.

What has been the difficulty? Descartes did not come to a stand-still at once, for he had tacitly presupposed the synthetic power of thought in itself – had even laid the ground for a theory of it in his reference to the ego, or self-consciousness. But his successors, neglecting this, and developing only the analytic aspect of thought, had produced a vacuum, where no step to existence or actual relations, being synthetic, could be taken. ‘Conceptions are empty.’ Nor had Locke been estopped immediately, for he presupposed some synthesis in the objective world; but it turns out that he had no right to it, and world, self and all actual relations, being synthetic, have gone. ‘Perceptions are blind.’ The problem, then, is clearly before Kant, as is the key to its solution. Synthesis is the *sine qua non*. Knowledge is synthesis, and the explanation of knowledge or truth must be found in the explanation of synthesis. Hence the question of method is now the question: how are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible? *A priori* means simply belonging to Reason in its own nature, so the question is, how and to what extent is Reason the source of synthesis?

The case stands thus: pure thought is purely analytic; experience *per se* gives only a blind rhapsody of particulars, without meaning or connection – actual experience, or knowledge involves, *is* synthesis. How shall it be got? One path remains open. We may suppose that while thought *in itself* is analytic, it is synthetic when applied to a material given it, and that from this material, by its functions, it forms the objects which it knows. And such, in its lowest terms, is the contribution Kant makes. The material, the manifold, the particulars, are furnished by sense in perception; the conceptions, the synthetic functions from Reason itself, and the union of these two elements are required, as well for the formation of the object known, as for its knowing.

To characterize Kant’s contribution to method, it remains to briefly examine these two sides of his theory: first, for the part played by the synthetic functions or the categories. These, in first intention, are so many conceptions of the understanding, and, as such, subject to analysis according to the law of identity, and thus furnish the subject matter of logic. But they also have relation to objects, and, as such, are synthetic and furnish the subject-matter of transcendental logic, whose work is to demonstrate and explain their objective validity. This is done by showing that ‘the categories make experience and its objects for the first time possible’. That is to say, Kant, after showing that the principles of identity and contradiction, though the highest criteria of logical thought, can give no aid in determining the truths of actual experience, inquires what is the criterion of truth for the latter, or what comes to the same thing, of the synthetic use of the categories as transcendental logic – and the answer he finds to be ‘possible experience’ itself. In other words, the categories have objective validity or synthetic use because without them

no experience would be possible. If Hume, for example, asks how we can have assurance that the notion of causality has any worth when applied to objects, he is answered by showing that without this notion experience as an intelligible connected system would not exist. By the categories the objects of experience are constituted, and hence their objective validity.

It follows, accordingly, that the system of experience may be determined, as to its form, by a completely made out system of categories. In them, as synthetic functions, constituting experience, we find the criterion of truth. But they themselves have a higher condition. As synthetic functions, they must all be functions of a higher unity which is subject to none of them. And this Kant calls the synthetic *unity* of apperception or, in brief, self-consciousness. This is the highest condition of experience, and in the developed notion of self-consciousness we find the criterion of truth. The theory of self-consciousness is method.

But this abstract statement must be further developed. It comes to saying, on the one hand, that the criterion of the categories is possible experience, and on the other, that the criterion of possible experience is the categories and their supreme condition. This is evidently a circle, yet a circle which, Kant would say, exists in the case itself, which expresses the very nature of knowledge. It but states that in knowledge there is naught but knowledge, which knows or is known – the only judge of knowledge, of experience, is experience itself. And experience is a system, a real whole made up of real parts. It as a whole is necessarily implied in every fact of experience, while it is constituted in and through these facts. In other terms, the relation of categories to experience is the relation of members of an organism to a whole. The criterion of knowledge is neither anything outside of knowledge, nor a particular conception within the sphere of knowledge which is not subject to the system as a whole; it is just this system which is constituted, so far as its form is concerned, by the categories.

Philosophic method, or the discovering of the criterion of truth, will consist, then, in no setting up of a transcendent object as the empiricists did, or of an abstract principle after the manner of the intellectual school. Since the categories, in and through self-consciousness, constitute experience, method will consist in making out a complete table of these categories in all their mutual relations, giving each its proper placing, with the full confidence that when so placed each will have its proper place in experience, i.e. its capacity for expressing reality determined.

But we have now strayed far from Kant. While having said nothing which is not deducible from his transcendental logic, we have abstracted from the fact that this holds only of the *form* of our knowledge; that there is also an *aesthetic*, and that thought is synthetic, not in itself, but only upon a material supplied to it from without. Turning to this, we

find the aspect of affairs changed. Though the categories make experience, they make it out of a foreign material to which they bear a purely external relation. They constitute objects, but these objects are not such in universal reference, but only to beings of like capacities of receptivity as ourselves. They respect not existence in itself, but ourselves as *affected* by that existence. The system of categories furnishes the criterion for all the knowledge we have, but this turns out to be no real knowledge. It is, Hegel says, as if one ascribed correct insight to a person, and then added that he could see only into the untruth, not the truth. Nor does the deficiency of our method end here. We had previously assumed that the categories as a system, or in their organic relation to self-consciousness, could be known. But it now turns out that nothing can be known except that to which this feeling of external matter through sensibility is given. To know this subject, or self-consciousness, is to make an object out of it, and every object is sensible, that is has a feeling which tells us how we are affected. But such a knowledge is evidently no knowledge of self-consciousness in its own nature. Thus, so far as knowledge is concerned, it must remain a bare form if self-identity, of 'I = I', into definite organic relations with which the categories can never be brought. Hence, it appears that our picture of a method was doubly false – false in that after all it could not reach truth; false in that after all no such method was in itself possible. Our organic system of categories cannot constitute absolute truth – and no such organic system is itself knowable. Criterion and method we are still without. The golden prize, which seemed just within our hands as long as we confined ourselves to the transcendental logic, turns out to be a tinsel superfluity.

Yet, none the less, there was the suggestion of a method there, which is exactly what we wish. The only question is: is its reference to the aesthetic necessary? Is the latter a necessary part of Kant's theory, or, so far as it concerns the reception of external matter, an excrescence? The question is just here: previous methods failed because they made no allowance for synthesis – Kant's because the synthesis can occur only upon matter foreign to it. Thought in the previous theories was *purely* analytic; in Kant's it is *purely* synthetic, in that it is synthesis of foreign material. Were thought at once synthetic *and* analytic, differentiating and integrating in its own nature, both affirmative and negative, relating to self at the same time that it related to other – indeed, through this relation to other – the difficulty would not have arisen.

Is the state of the case as Kant supposes? Must we say that Reason is synthetic only upon condition that material be given it to act upon, or may it be that while we must say that for the individual the material, nay, the form as indissolubly connected with the material, is given, yet, to Reason itself, nothing is given in the sense of being foreign to it?

A slight examination will show us that, at least as far as Kant is

concerned, the former supposition is but an arbitrary limitation or assumption, which Kant imposed upon himself, or received without question from previous philosophy. On one side, he had learned that pure thought is analytic; on the other, that the individual is affected with sensations impressed upon it by external objects. At the same time that he corrects both of these doctrines with his own deduction of the categories, he formally retains both errors.

So we have him asking at the very outset, as a matter of course: 'In what other way is it to be conceived that the knowing power can be excited to activity, except by objects which affect our senses?' That is to say, he assumes at the outset that there is something external to Reason, by which it must be excited. He perceives, what all admit, that an individual organized in a certain specific way with certain senses, and external things acting upon these senses, are conditions to our knowledge, and then proceeds to identify respectively this individual with the subject, and these things with the object, in the process of knowledge. But here it is that we ask with what right does he make this identification. If it is made, then surely the case stands with Reason as he says it does – it acts only upon a material foreign to it. Yet this individual and these things are but known objects already constituted by the categories, and existing only for the synthetic unity of apperception or self-consciousness. This, then, is the real subject, and the so-called subject and object are but the forms in which it expresses its own activity. In short, the relation of subject and object is not a 'transcendent' one, but an 'immanent', and is but the first form in which Reason manifests that it is both synthetic and analytic; that it separates itself from itself, that it may thereby reach higher unity with itself. It is the highest type of the law which Reason follows everywhere. The material which was supposed to confront Reason as foreign to it is but the manifestation of Reason itself. Such, at least, are the results which we reach in the Transcendental Deduction, and such are the results we consider ourselves justified to keep in opposition to Kant's pure assumptions.

We see the same thing in Kant's theory of phenomenon. Just as, concerning the process of knowledge, he assumes that subject and object are in external relation to each other, and hence Reason in contact with a foreign material, so here he assumes that the character of phenomenality consists in relation to an unknowable noumenon. The phenomenon is referred to something outside of experience, instead of being defined by its relation within experience – in which case it would seem to be a phenomenon in its own nature, in that the categories which constitute it as such are not adequate to truth.

We have but to turn to Kant's derivation of the categories to be again assured that Kant's theory of Reason as synthetic only in reference to foreign material is one purely assumed. As is notorious, these he took

from the logic of the school, which he held to give a complete table of all the forms of pure thought. When we turn to this table we find the highest point reached in it to be reciprocity. Now, reciprocity is precisely that external relation of two things to each other that we have already found existing, in Kant's theory, between subject and object in knowledge – the relations of things that are independent of each other but mutually act upon each other. So, too, it is but another way of stating that thought, analytic in itself, is synthetic when applied to an external material, or that this material, blind and haphazard in itself, is formed by something acting upon it. When Kant tells us, therefore, that the categories are not limited in their own nature, but become so when applied, as they must be, to determine space and time, we have in our hands the means of correcting him. They are limited, and express just the limitation of Kant himself. And Kant confesses their insufficiency as soon as he takes up the questions of moral and aesthetic experience and of life itself. Here we find the categories of freedom determined by ends, free production, organism to be everywhere present, while all through his *Critiques* is woven in the notion of an intuitive understanding which is the ultimate criterion of all truth, and this understanding is just what we have already met as the organic system of experience or self-consciousness.

Whether we consider the relations of subject and object, or the nature of the categories, we find ourselves forced into the presence of the notion of organic relation. The relation between subject and object is not an external one; it is one in a higher unity which is itself constituted by this relation. The only conception adequate to experience as a whole is organism. What is involved in the notion of organism? Why, precisely the Idea which we had formerly reached of a Reason which is both analytic and synthetic, a Reason which differentiates itself that it may integrate itself into fuller riches, a Reason that denies itself that it may become itself. Such a Reason, and neither an analytic thought, nor an analytic experience, nor a Reason which is analytic in itself, and synthetic for something else, is the ultimate criterion of truth, and the theory of this Reason is the philosophic method.

The two defects which we found before in Kant's theory now vanish. The method is no longer one which can reach untruth only, nor is it a method which cannot be made out. The track which we were upon in following the course of the *Transcendental Deduction* was the right one. The criterion of experience is the system of categories in their organic unity in self-consciousness, and the method consists in determining this system and the part each plays in constituting it. The method takes the totality of experience to pieces, and brings before us its conditions in their entirety. The relations of its content, through which alone this content has character and meaning, whereby it becomes an intelligible, connected whole, must be made to appear.

It was the suggestion of this method, it was the suggestion of so many means for its execution, it was the actual carrying out in so many points that makes Kant's 'Philosophy' the *critical* philosophy, and his work the *crisis*, the separating, dividing, turning-point of modern philosophy, and this hurried sketch would not be complete if we did not briefly point out what steps have been taken towards the fulfilling of the Ideal. This is found chiefly in Hegel and his *Logic*. We can only discuss in the light of what has already been said why Hegel begins with logic; why the negative plays so important a part in his philosophy, and what is the meaning of dialectic.

(1) Logic. One of Hegel's repeated charges against Kant is that he examines the categories with reference to their *objective* character, and not to determine their own meaning and worth. At first it might seem as if this were the best way to determine their worth, but it ought now to be evident that such a procedure is both to presuppose that they are subjective in themselves, and that we have a ready-made conception of object by which to judge them – in short, it amounts to saying that these conceptions are purely analytic, and have meaning only in relation to an external material. Hence the method must examine the categories without any reference to subjective or objective existences; or, to speak properly, since we now see that there are no purely subjective or objective existences, without any relation to things and thoughts as two distinct spheres. The antithesis between them is not to be blinked out of sight, but it must be treated as one which exists within Reason, and not one with one term in and the other out. The categories which, for the individual, determine the nature of the object, and those which state how the object is brought into the subjective form of cognition, must be deduced from Reason alone. A theory performing this task is what Hegel calls logic, and is needed not only to overcome Kant's defects, but is immediately suggested by his positive accomplishments. In our account of the Transcendental Deduction we saw that self-consciousness was the supreme condition of all the categories, and hence can be subject in itself to none of them. When it is made subject we have no longer the absolute self-consciousness, but the empirical ego, the object of the inner sense. In short, the categories constitute the individuals as an object of experience, just as much as they do the material known. Hence they are no more subjective than objective. We may call them indifferently neither or both. The truth is they belong to a sphere where the antithesis between subject and object is still potential, or *an sich*. It is evident, therefore, that logic, in the Hegelian use, is just that criterion of truth which we thought at first to find in Kant's transcendental Logic – it is an account of the conceptions or categories of Reason which constitute experience, internal and external, subjective and objective, and an account of them as a system, an organic

unity in which each has its own place fixed. It is the completed method of philosophy.

(2) The Negative in Hegel. It ought now to be evident that any Philosophy which can pretend to be a method of truth must show Reason as both analytic *and* synthetic. If history can demonstrate anything, it has demonstrated this, both by its successes and its failures. Reason must be that which separates itself, which differentiates, goes forth into differences, that it may then grasp these differences into a unity of its own. It cannot unite unless there be difference; there can be no synthesis where there is not analysis. On the other hand, the differences must remain for ever foreign to Reason unless it brings them together; there can be no analysis where there is not synthesis, or a unity to be dirempted. If there be no synthesis in Reason, we end in the impotence of the former school of intellectualism, or in the helpless scepticism of Hume; if Reason be synthetic only upon a foreign material, we end in the contradictions of Kant. If there is to be *knowledge*, Reason must include both elements within herself. It is Hegel's thorough recognition of this fact that causes him to lay such emphasis on the negative. Pure affirmation or identity reaches its summit in Spinoza, where all is lost in the infinite substance of infinite attributes, as waves in the sea. Yet even Spinoza was obliged to introduce the negative, the determinations, the modes, though he never could succeed in getting them by any means from his pure affirmation. In Hume we find pure difference or negation, the manifold particularization of sensations, but even he is obliged to introduce synthetic principles in the laws of association, though he never succeeds in legitimately deriving them from sensations, for a 'consistent sensationalism is speechless'. Kant had tried a compromise of the principle, synthesis from within, difference from without. That, too, failed to give us knowledge or a criterion of truth. Hegel comprehends the problem, and offers us Reason affirmative *and* negative, and affirmative only in and through its own negations, as the solution.

(3) Dialectic. We have now the notion of dialectic before us in its essential features. We have seen that the desired object is a theory of the conceptions of Reason in an organic system, and that Reason is itself both integrating and differentiating. Dialectic is the construction by Reason, through its successive differentiations and resumptions of these differences into higher unities, of just this system. If we take any single category of Reason – that is to say, some conception which we find involved in the system of experience – this is one specific form into which Reason has unified or 'synthesized' itself. Reason itself is immanent in this category; but, since Reason is also differentiating or analytic, Reason must reveal itself as such in this category, which accordingly passes, or is reflected, or develops into its opposite, while the two conceptions are then resumed into the higher unity of a more concrete conception.

Since the system of knowledge is implicit in each of its members, each category must judge itself, or rather, Reason, in its successive forms, passes judgment on its own inadequacy until the adequate is reached – and this can be nothing but Reason no longer implicit, but developed into its completed system. Reason must everywhere, and in all its forms, propose itself as what it is, viz. absolute or adequate to the entire truth of experience; but, since at first its *form* is still inadequate, it must show what is absolutely implicit in it, viz. the entire system. That at first it does by doing what it is the nature of the Reason which it manifests to do, by differencing itself, or passing into its opposite, its other; but, since Reason is also synthetic, grasping together, these differences must resolve themselves into a higher unity. Thus, Reason continues until it has developed itself into the conception which is in form equal to what itself is in content, or, until it has manifested all that it is implicitly. A twofold process has occurred. On the one hand, each special form of Reason or category has been placed; that is its degree of ability to state absolute truth fixed by its place in the whole organic system. On the other, the system itself has been developed; that is to say, as Reason goes on manifesting its own nature through successive differences and unities, each lower category is not destroyed, but retained – but retained at its proper value. Each, since it is Reason, has its relative *truth*; but each, since Reason is not yet adequately manifested, has only a *relative* truth. The Idea is the completed category, and this has for its meaning or content Reason made explicit or manifested; that is all the stages or types of Reason employed in reaching it. ‘The categories are not errors, which one goes through on the way to the truth, but phases of truth. Their completed system in its organic wholeness is *the* Truth.’ And such a system is at once philosophic method and criterion; method, because it shows us not only the way to reach truth, but truth itself in construction; criterion, because it gives us the form of experience to which all the facts of experience as organic members must conform.

It will be seen, I hope, that we have not left our subject, ‘Kant’s relation to philosophic method’; for a crisis is nothing in itself. It is a crisis only as it is the turning-point; and a turning-point is the old passing into the new, and can be understood only as the old and the new are understood. The criterion of Kant is just this turning-point; it is the transition of the old abstract thought, the old meaningless conception of experience, into the new concrete thought, the ever-growing, ever-rich experience.

Notes

1. See Kant's *Werke*, Rosenkranz's edn., vol. ii, p. 7.
2. See especially his essay on attempts to introduce the idea of negative quality into philosophy. *Werke*, vol. i.
3. *ibid.*, p. 157.

Extract from *Thought and Reality in Hegel's System* (1910)

Gustavus Watts Cunningham

Thought as objective and universal

Perhaps no part of Hegel's system has been more persistently overlooked or misunderstood than has his doctrine of the nature of thought. Certainly no part of his system deserves to be more carefully studied. For this is the doctrine that is absolutely fundamental to his system; and it must be understood before any fair appreciation of his system can be arrived at or any just criticism of his contentions be advanced. To give an exposition of the Hegelian doctrine of thought, and to do this as much as is practicable in the author's own words, is the aim of this chapter.

Almost universally it is taken for granted that the *Logic* contains all that Hegel thought it worth while to say about the nature of thought. His epistemology is criticized and defended against criticism exclusively on the basis of the dialectical development of the categories, the assumption of both critic and champion being that here we find Hegel's last word concerning the nature of knowledge. That such an assumption is erroneous and leads to positive error in interpreting the Hegelian epistemology will, I trust, appear in what is to follow. The *Logic* does, indeed, purport to give an account of the essentially organic nature of thought, by showing how one category necessarily loses itself in its negative, which proves to be, not an abstract negative, but a negative that dialectically leads on to a more concrete synthesis of the two opposed categories. The *Logic* leads progressively from the abstract categories of Being, through the more concrete categories of Essence, to the still more concrete categories of the Notion; and finally to the most concrete category of all, that category in which all the lower categories find their 'truth', namely, the Absolute Idea. This the *Logic* does; but this is all

that it does. It tells us nothing direct about the empirical significance of the categories themselves. Except by frequent hints – which indeed are quite emphatic and significant – the *Logic* gives us no insight into that fundamental problem of epistemology, namely, the significance of the subject–object relation. On the contrary, as Hegel himself declares, the very purpose of the *Logic* is to deal with the categories in the pure ether of thought and in abstraction from their empirical setting.¹ So in the *Logic* we search in vain for an exposition of this most important aspect of our knowing experience; the implications of the objective reference of thought are not explicitly touched upon there. For such an exposition we must look elsewhere.

The exposition for which we seek is to be found in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Perhaps this will appear beyond dispute from a consideration of some of Hegel's own statements on the point. In the Preface to the *Phenomenology* he says: 'The task which I have set myself is to elaborate the fact that philosophy approaches the form of science – approaches the point where it lays aside the name of *love for knowledge*, and becomes *real knowledge*.'² Again, later in the same Preface we read: 'The process of science in general, or of *knowledge*, is set forth in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Knowledge as it is at first, or the *immediate spirit*, is spiritless or *sensuous consciousness*. In order to become real knowledge, to reach the element of science which is its pure notion itself, this sensuous consciousness has to work itself through a long way.'³ This way is, of course, that traced by the *Phenomenology*. A little later in the same work we are told that the problem of the *Phenomenology* is simply 'an investigation and proof of the reality of knowledge'.⁴ This same point Hegel is emphasizing when he urges that the *Phenomenology* is the science of experience; for experience, he tells us, is only the 'dialectical process (*Bewegung*) which perfects consciousness in itself, both in its knowledge and in its object'.⁵ In other words, since experience is essentially a subject–object relation, its truth is to be found in the determination of the real import and significance of that relation. Thus it seems that the problem of *Phenomenology* is pretty clearly defined: it is simply the progressive definition and exposition of the significance of this duality within experience. It is not merely to trace an organic development from one to another stage of consciousness, as Professor Baillie would seem to suggest.⁶ Rather is it to disclose the important change that takes place between subject and object as the knowing experience is traced through the various attitudes of consciousness. As Lasson aptly remarks in the Introduction to his recent edition of the *Phenomenology*, the point of interest in the work is the transition 'from one relation of consciousness to the entire world of being, to another such relation'.⁷ Hegel's purpose in this novel Introduction to Philosophy is not like Kant's in the first of the Critiques, namely, to investigate the possibility and limitations of

knowledge. He accepts knowledge and the knowing experience very much as it is accepted by common sense, and then proceeds to develop its implications. Passing dialectically from sensuous consciousness through self-consciousness, reason, spirit and religion, he finally arrives at what seems to him to be the true attitude of consciousness, the truth of the knowing experience. This final result of the *Phenomenology*, which Hegel calls absolute knowledge (*das absolute Wissen*), is thus his definition of the real nature of knowledge; it is his final statement of the significance of the subject-object relation within concrete experience.

It is very important to notice at the outset, and to keep constantly in mind, the fact that Hegel bases this conception of absolute knowledge directly and unequivocally upon our common knowing experience. This point is so fundamental, and is so generally neglected by the critics, that it needs emphasis even at the risk of digression. If there is wanted more evidence than has already been adduced, it is not far to seek. In the Preface to the *Phenomenology* itself, we find an explicit statement to the effect that there is no break between consciousness as it appears in sensuous perception and in absolute knowing; and this very fact, Hegel argues, makes possible the transition from the lower to the higher stage. 'The beginning of philosophy', he says, 'makes the presupposition or demand that consciousness be in this element' (i.e., as the context indicates, in the 'element' of 'absolute science', which is simply the point of view of absolute knowledge). 'But this element receives its completion and clearness only through the process of its development. . . . On its side, science demands of self-consciousness that it raise itself into this ether. . . . On the other hand, the individual has a right to ask that science at least let down to him the ladder to this standpoint, that is, show him the standpoint within himself.'⁸ Furthermore, in the Introduction to the larger *Logic* we read: 'Absolute knowledge is the truth of all modes or attitudes of consciousness. . . .'⁹ Finally, there is a passage in the smaller *Logic* which runs thus: 'In my *Phenomenology of Spirit* . . . the method adopted was to begin with the first and simplest phase of mind, immediate consciousness, and to show how that stage gradually of necessity worked onward to the philosophical point of view, the necessity of that view being proved by the process.'¹⁰ Now it would seem that the import of such passages as these is unmistakable. The *Phenomenology* begins with the most naive attitude of consciousness, where the matter of intuition is looked upon as a mere datum; its progress, as Professor McGilvary suggests,¹¹ consists just in showing that this sensuous consciousness is an essential element in absolute knowing. In other words, the standpoint of absolute knowing is involved in every, even the simplest, phase of consciousness; it is implied in every act of knowledge, in every subject-object relation – which is tantamount to saying that it is conterminous with experience itself.

Near the end of his discussion of the *Phenomenology*, Haym, looking back over the course of its development, remarks: 'This whole phenomenological genesis of absolute knowledge was nothing other than the *presence of the Absolute*, which unfolded itself before our very eyes in the methodical manner peculiar to its spiritual nature. It was the self-development of the Absolute as it has mirrored itself in consciousness and in history.'¹² One is led to believe that the critic means by this, as he says later, that the ego 'is at the beginning of the *Phenomenology* exactly where it ought to be at the end – not in itself, but in the Absolute'.¹³ The suggestion of such a point of view as this, however, seems to me to be at best misleading. Whatever may be said concerning the relation of the result of the *Phenomenology* to the standpoint of an Absolute Intelligence,¹⁴ there is certainly no reason for maintaining that Hegel would ask us to assume such a standpoint at the beginning of the *Phenomenology*. He asks us merely to place ourselves at the point of view of sensuous consciousness, and to try to discover its logical implications. It is, indeed, true that in the attitude of sensuous consciousness Hegel sees the standpoint of absolute knowing, which thus finds its basis in the actual knowing experiences of finite individuals; and it is also true that these experiences are never left out of consideration by him. But this means nothing more than that absolute knowledge is logically involved in every knowing experience, and that investigation can prove that it is so involved. Hegel himself has very clearly put the matter in another context: 'It may be said that the Absolute is involved in every beginning, just as every advance is simply an exposition of it. . . . But because it is at first only implicit, it is really not the Absolute. . . . The advance, therefore, is not a sort of overflow, as it would be were the beginning truly the Absolute; rather the development consists in the fact that the universal determines itself. . . . Only in its completion is it the Absolute.'¹⁵ Even granting, then, for the sake of the argument, that Hegel finally identifies absolute knowledge with the point of view of an omniscient Intelligence (which assumption is by no means self-evident, – indeed, it is difficult to prove that Hegel's Absolute is such an Intelligence), we are certainly not justified in saying that he emerges from the *Phenomenology* with nothing more than the assumption with which he began his investigation. The standpoint of absolute knowledge is not assumed at the beginning; it is arrived at only at the end. And to accuse Hegel of having begun with the point of view of the Absolute is an indication that his actual procedure has been misconstrued. Absolute knowledge does not, as Haym asserts, find its justification in the fact that 'the *Weltgeist* has completed itself in history', but, as we shall see later, in the fact that it is the necessary presupposition of all concrete individual experience.

Lotze, too, has brought practically the same accusation against Hegel. 'It was not after Hegel's mind', he tells us, 'to begin by determining the

subjective forms of thought, under which alone we can apprehend the concrete nature of this ground of the Universe – a nature perhaps to us inaccessible. From the outset he looked on the motion of our thought in its effort to gain a clear idea of this still obscure goal of our aspiration as the proper inward development of the Absolute itself, which only needed to be pursued consistently in order gradually to bring into consciousness all that the universe contains.’¹⁶ Now I submit that such an accusation entirely overlooks the procedure of the *Phenomenology* in establishing the category of absolute knowledge. The very purpose of this effort was ‘to determine the subjective forms of thought’ as they appear in the knowing experience of the individual. It is true that Hegel did not enter into psychological discussion of individual minds; his aim was epistemological and not psychological.¹⁷ It is also true that he ended his investigation by exhibiting the essential objectivity of these so-called ‘subjective forms’ of thought. But the fact still remains that he took his stand on actual human experience and began his inquiry with common everyday consciousness. In the case of the *Logic* (provided one forgets the fact that the result of the *Phenomenology* is its presupposition) it may be argued with some show of plausibility that from the outset the author regards thought as the ‘proper inward development of the Absolute itself’. But there can be no doubt whatever concerning the baselessness of the charge when made with reference to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The category of absolute knowledge is not a first principle shot out of a pistol at us, as it were, but a conclusion laboriously reached; and it is attained only by a careful and painstaking examination of all stages of consciousness from the sensuous to the scientific and religious. Wherever there is a subject-object relation, there the characteristics of absolute knowledge are disclosed.

Absolute knowledge being, then, Hegel’s interpretation of the essential characteristics of thought as it appears in every actual knowing experience, the question arises concerning the details of the conception. What are the fundamental characteristics of thought as defined in this Hegelian category? It is to an attempt to answer this question, partially at least, that we now address ourselves.

In the first place, Hegel claims that his conception of absolute knowledge gives thought release from the subjectivity in which it was bound by both the Kantian and Fichtean systems. Kant, he admits, does indeed give to thought a quasi-objectivity, namely, universal validity. ‘Kant gave the title objective to the intellectual factor, to the universal and necessary; and he was quite justified in so doing.’¹⁸ That is to say, for Kant objectivity means the universally valid in contradistinction to the particularity and relativity of sense-perception; and this is a step in the right direction towards true objectivity. ‘But after all’, Hegel continues, ‘objectivity of thought, in Kant’s sense, is again to a certain extent subjective. Thoughts,

according to Kant, although universal and necessary categories, are *only our* thoughts – separated by an impassable gulf from the thing, as it exists apart from our knowledge.¹⁹ In other words, Kant's categories cannot by their very nature, express the real: they are mere ideas, which can indeed tell us about the temporal and spatial relations of objects, but which just for this reason can give us no insight into the nature of ultimate reality. Hegel elsewhere speaks of them as prisms through which the light of truth is so refracted and broken that it can never be had in its purity. Such idealism, Hegel justly concludes, is purely subjective.²⁰ Heroic as were Fichte's efforts to break through to reality, they were, Hegel asserts, unavailing. 'Fichte', he says, 'never advanced beyond Kant's conclusion, that the finite only is knowable, while the infinite transcends the range of thought. What Kant calls the thing-by-itself, Fichte calls the impulse from without – that abstraction of something else than "I", not otherwise describable or definable than as the negative or non-Ego in general.'²¹ To express it otherwise, Fichte, in his search for objectivity, finds nothing more satisfactory than an unattainable ideal, an eternal *Sollen*. But this vanishing ideal does not meet the difficulty; thought, which merely ought to be objective, is still subjective, even though an infinite time be allowed for transition to objectivity. Consequently, Fichte's position, like Kant's, is in the last analysis nothing more than subjective idealism. Now the standpoint of absolute knowledge, Hegel maintains, transcends the dualism in which the systems of Kant and Fichte seem hopelessly involved. It gives to thought, not a quasi-objectivity or an objectivity that ought to be, but an objectivity that is at once genuine and actual.

Hegel has left us in no doubt as to what he thinks such an objectivity implies. In the context of the above criticism of Kant, he says: 'The true objectivity of thinking means that the thoughts, far from being merely ours, must at the same time be the real essence of the things, and of whatever is an object to us.' Later in the same context he tells us that objectivity means 'the thought-apprehended essence of the existing thing, in contra-distinction from what is merely *our* thought, and what consequently is still separated from the thing itself, as it exists in independent essence'. From these very explicit statements it is evident that objectivity of thought means for Hegel at least two things: (a) that thought which is truly objective is not particular and individual, but in a sense transcends the individual; and (b) that truly objective thought does actually express the essence of things. A consideration of these two points will now occupy our attention for a time.

The first of these points, that thought is really more than an individual affair, Hegel states very explicitly in the smaller *Logic*. In the twenty-third section he asserts that thought is 'no private or particular state or act of the subject, but rather that attitude of consciousness where the abstract self, freed from all the special limitations to which its ordinary

states or qualities are liable, restricts itself to that universal action in which it is identical with all individuals'. Furthermore, he constantly insists that the dialectic of thought is really *der Gang der Sache selbst*. 'It is not the outward action of subjective thought, but the personal soul of the content, which unfolds its branches and fruit organically.'²² The question, however, at once arises, are not such statements meaningless? Is the 'abstract self, freed from all the special limitations to which its ordinary states or qualities are liable', anything more than an hypostasized entity? Do we know anything about the 'universal action' of thought apart from an individual experience? Is the finite knower merely a passive observer of the 'march of the object', or of the organically unfolding 'soul of the content'? To meet the objection implied in these questions, a preliminary consideration is necessary.

Every act of thought may be looked at from two points of view. It may be regarded as a process in time, that is as a mere psychological event, or as a meaning. As a process in time, it is a state of consciousness among other such states to which it is related and by reference to which it may be explained. As a meaning, it is the expression of the relation of subject to object, the expression of which relation gives it its significance as an act of knowledge. Neither of these aspects of thought can, of course, be neglected; a timeless act of thought is as much a non-entity as a meaningless act of thought. But, on the other hand, the two aspects must not be confused; thought as a process in time is something quite different from thought as a meaning. Both points of view are legitimate and, indeed, necessary in dealing with concrete mental experience. If, now, these ways of viewing thought be the standpoints of psychology and epistemology, respectively, we are perfectly right in saying that, from the psychological point of view, thought is subjective and particular, while from the standpoint of epistemology it is trans-subjective. As a psychological process, thought is subjective and particular for the simple reason that, when so viewed, it is nothing more than an element in a complex presentation which at a particular moment makes up the mental life of the individual subject. Even belief in a trans-subjective world, the psychologist treats, as Professor Seth Pringle-Pattison says, 'simply as a subjective fact; he analyzes its constituents and tells us the complex elements of which it is built up; he tells us with great precision what we do believe, but so far as he is a pure psychologist he does not attempt to tell us whether our belief is true, whether we have real warrant for it'.²³ Epistemology, on the contrary, necessarily transcends this subjective standpoint of psychology. It deals, not with the knowing experience of any particular mind, not with knowledge as it is possessed by any particular subject, but with knowledge as it is in itself. Epistemology finds its special field just in determining the validity or falsity of the claims of our trans-subjective belief. Its business is to give us a criterion of truth, to

investigate the subject-object relation within experience and to develop its implications. In doing this it must neglect the particular experiences, or, to use Professor Bosanquet's phrase, it must abstract from the abstractions of psychology, and fix its attention upon the essential nature of knowledge qua knowledge. It does not, of course, deny the significance of the psychological aspect of thought, nor does it try to escape from the implications of experience when read from that angle of vision. It simply deals with thought from its own specific standpoint, its aim being to handle its data unencumbered as much as possible by psychological considerations.²⁴

Now, as I understand Hegel, we can accuse him neither of confusing these two points of view, nor of overlooking one in his zeal for the other. As has been pointed out, his interest in the discussion of knowledge is primarily epistemological in the sense above defined; and he keeps consistently to this point of departure. He sees clearly that, from this point of view, knowledge must be investigated as it is in and for itself and freed from the prejudices and preconceptions which attach to it in individual minds; if an adequate standard of truth is to be attained, relativity in knowledge must be overcome. But it should be very carefully noted that Hegel does not, at any rate need not, forget that thought is always a process in a knowing mind. The objectivity which he claims for thought in the category of absolute knowledge is claimed for the thought of every individual who knows; the truth of absolute experience, truth as it is in itself and for itself, is simply the truth of the experiences that are here and now. This point I tried to emphasize at the beginning of the discussion. Thus the 'abstract self', freed from the limitations of its ordinary states and busy in its universal mode of action, turns out to be the finite self making an unusually strenuous effort to be consistent. Genuinely objective thought is not the private possession of A or B; it is rather the thought activity in which, so far as they are rational creatures, A and B participate. Even if we are fully convinced that Hegel has gone too far in the identification of the finite knower with the Absolute, still we must admit the legitimacy and necessity of this demand of the category of absolute knowledge. For if the subjectivity in which experience is involved by the Kantian and Fichtean philosophies is really to be transcended, experience must be given some form of genuine objectivity; and if that form of objectivity is to be found in thought, then thought must be looked upon as it is in its essential nature and not as it appears in this or that individual mind. And this, it would seem, is all that Hegel means when he says that truly objective thought transcends the individual experience.

The second factor involved in the conception of true objectivity, namely, the capacity of thought to express the essential nature of its object, Hegel shows to be the necessary presupposition of all knowing

experience. Thought must disclose the constitution of reality, he maintains, otherwise experience is doomed to a hopeless dualism. 'The truth as such', he tells us, 'is essentially in knowledge.'²⁵ 'Only in so far as reflection has relation to the Absolute is it reason and its activity that of true knowledge (*Wissen*).'²⁶ Every individual who knows does, by virtue of that very fact, transcend the dualism which seems to exist between subject and object; on any other assumption it is not easy to see how experience can be brought into actual contact with ultimate reality. To elaborate this argument is exactly what Hegel undertakes in the *Phenomenology*. He shows there by dialectical procedure how the lowest and most naive attitude of consciousness to its object subsumes the opposition which *prima facie* seems such a barrier to the comprehension of reality; such subsumption must be assumed, or we shall never be able to say that experience and reality are one. One might summarily say, without doing violence to Hegel's own words, that the purpose of the *Phenomenology* is to show, in opposition to the Kantian philosophy, why the *Ding-an-sich* must be known and how it can be known. It must be known, because this is the presupposition of experience from its earliest and simplest stages; it can be known, because thought is no merely subjective and private process going on in our heads, but in its very essence is a significant relation to objects. Thus Hegel solves the problem of the opposition between subject and object by pointing out that the problem is really made by our own abstract procedure in dealing with experience. In point of fact, he tells us, there is no such opposition; on the contrary, the very fact that we can have significant knowledge forces us to the conclusion that thought is truly objective, and that the object is in reality as it is in knowledge.

Hegel's position on this point can, perhaps, be more clearly understood when contrasted with Lotze's view. In his *Logic* Lotze summarizes his position thus: 'We have convinced ourselves that this changing world of our ideas is the sole material given us to work upon; that truth and the knowledge of truth consist only in the laws of interconnection which are found to obtain universally within a given set of ideas.'²⁷ Now when we recall that these ideas are for Lotze more or less subjective, mere 'tools' by means of which we somehow come in contact with reality, but through which the essence of objects can never be known, the contrast between his position and Hegel's is plain. According to the one, we are shut off from reality by means of the very tools we vainly endeavour to work with; reality is a realm 'whose margin fades forever and forever' as we move. According to the other, we are never out of touch with reality, since to know is *ipso facto* to know the essential nature of the objects of knowledge. To the former, truth is nothing more than consistency within a given set of ideas; to the latter, truth is nothing less than reality itself. In a word, on the theory of Lotze thought is after all still subjective, still

confined to the abstract realm of bare universals, impotent to overtake the phantom reality it pursues: Hegel teaches, on the contrary, that thought is essentially objective, that form and content interpenetrate, that the process of knowledge is the process of things. And this conception of the objectivity of thought, Hegel would urge, is a necessary presupposition of experience, unless indeed we are willing to abide by the consequences of an epistemological dualism.

But if thought expresses the essence of its object, then thought *ipso facto* comprehends its object and so exhausts reality. This implication of his doctrine of the objectivity of thought Hegel not only recognizes but insists upon. 'Conception is the penetration of the object, which is then no longer opposed to me. From it I have taken its own peculiar nature, which it had as an independent object in opposition to me. As Adam said to Eve, "Thou art flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone", so says the Spirit, "This object is spirit of my spirit, and all alienation has disappeared."' ²⁸ This same idea Hegel has in mind when he speaks of thought as *begreifendes Denken*. '*Begreifendes Denken*', says Professor McGilvary, 'is grasping, clutching thought, thought that grips its object as its own inalienable possession. Perhaps we might translate *das begreifende Denken* by the phrase "object-appropriating thought"; for the logical relation of such thought to its object is analogous to the legal relation of the master to the slave; the slave had no independent status; he stood only *in* his master, who engulfed him.'²⁹ Again, the one distinguishing feature between what Hegel terms 'finite' and 'infinite' thought is that the latter destroys the opposition between form and content, which opposition the former never transcends; as Hegel puts it, 'finite' thought is 'subjective, arbitrary, and accidental', while 'infinite' thought is what alone 'can get really in touch with the supreme and true'.³⁰ And, of course, it is 'infinite' thought with which Hegel has to do in his category of absolute knowledge. Furthermore, in the Introduction to the larger *Logic* Hegel argues that to separate the form and content of knowledge is to presuppose an external objective world which is independent of thought; and this, he objects, is unjustifiable.³¹ And later in the same Introduction, we read: 'In logic we have nothing to do with thought *about* something which lies independently outside of thought as the basis of it.'³² Finally, in the smaller *Logic*, he asserts: 'In the negative unity of the Idea, the infinite overlaps and includes the finite, thought overlaps being, subjectivity overlaps objectivity.'³³ Other passages bearing on this point might be quoted, did it seem necessary; but the above passages state very clearly Hegel's position. In fact, the position is inevitably involved in his whole conception of the objectivity of knowledge. Truly objective knowledge cannot have opposed to it an unaccountable residuum of fact, which it is unable to comprehend or interpret; on the contrary, it must be conterminous with reality.

The following quotation from Mr McTaggart presents an admirable antithesis to Hegel's position here:

Thought is a process of mediation and relation, and implies something immediate to be related, which cannot be found in thought. Even if a stage of thought could be conceived as existing, in which it was self-subsistent, and in which it had no reference to any *data* . . . at any rate this is not the ordinary thought of common life. And as the dialectic process professes to start from a basis common to every one . . . it is certain that it will be necessary for thought, in the dialectic process, to have some relation to data given immediately, and independent of that thought itself.³⁴

It makes no difference that this statement is given by the critic as an interpretation of Hegel; it is in truth exactly contrary to Hegel's view of the matter. Thought, as Hegel conceives of it, certainly has no data opposed to, and independent of it; nor is it merely a process of mediation and relation among phenomena external to it. It bears no relation whatever to immediately given data, 'nuclei' of being, which lie outside of and beyond it, for there are no such. On the contrary, it transcends this dualism, and always finds itself 'at home' in its object from which every trace of alienation has disappeared.³⁵ Perhaps I can best bring out the contrast between Hegel's real position and that attributed to him by his critic by letting him once more speak for himself:

If under the process of knowledge we figure to ourselves an external operation in which it is brought into a merely mechanical relation to an object, that is to say, remains outside it, and is only externally applied to it, knowledge is presented in such a relation as a particular thing for itself, so that it may well be that its forms have nothing in common with the qualities of the object; and thus, when it concerns itself with an object, it remains only in its own forms, and does not reach the essential qualities of the object, that is to say, does not become real knowledge of it. In such a relation knowledge is determined as finite, and as of the finite; in its object there remains something essentially inner, whose notion is thus unattainable by and foreign to knowledge, which finds here its limit and its end, and is on that account limited and finite.

So far we have a statement of the critic's view with its attendant difficulties. By way of criticism and exposition of his own position, Hegel continues:

But to take such a relation as the only one, or as final or absolute, is

a purely made-up and unjustifiable assumption of the Understanding. Real knowledge, inasmuch as it does not remain outside the object, but in point of fact occupies itself with it, must be immanent in the object, the proper movement of its nature, only expressed in the form of thought and taken up into consciousness.³⁶

This passage is self-explanatory, and comment on it seems superfluous. In it Hegel has simply pointed out the inevitable dualism involved in the position which Mr McTaggart has attributed to him; and in opposition to such a position he has stated his own more objective standpoint.

An objection which arises just here seems *prima facie* unanswerable. If it be true that thought actually does exhaust reality, then it must be that thought, or knowing experience, and reality coincide. But can such a view possibly be seriously entertained? Is it not nonsense to say that thought is coextensive with the real, when so much of our everyday experience, our hopes, our fears, our loves, our hates fall outside the thinking process? Can one be so mad as to attempt to reduce existential reality to terms of ideas? Lotze has put the objection very forcibly thus:

Nothing is simpler than to convince ourselves that every apprehending intelligence can only see things as they look to it when it perceives them, not as they look when no one perceives them; he who demands a knowledge which should be more than a perfectly connected and consistent system of ideas about the thing, a knowledge which should actually exhaust the thing itself, is no longer asking for knowledge at all, but for something entirely unintelligible.³⁷

Mr Bradley, in a classic passage, has voiced the same feeling:

Unless thought stands for something that falls beyond mere intelligence, if 'thinking' is not used with some strange implication that never was part of the meaning of the word, a lingering scruple still forbids us to believe that reality can ever be purely rational . . . The notion that existence could be the same as understanding strikes as cold and ghostlike as the dreariest materialism. That the glory of this world in the end is appearance leaves the world more glorious, if we feel it is a show of some fuller splendour; but the sensuous curtain is a deception and a cheat, if it hides some colourless movement of atoms, some spectral woof of impalpable abstractions, or unearthly ballet of bloodless categories.³⁸

Now Hegel's answer to this objection is, I think, found in the second characteristic of thought as he has defined it for us in absolute knowledge; and this we shall proceed at once to examine.

Thought, Hegel argues, is not mere abstract cognition, but, on the contrary, is truly universal. In answer to Mr Bradley he would say that thought does stand for something which falls beyond *mere* intelligence. That is to say, actual concrete thought, in Professor Bosanquet's phrasology, is a process, not of selective omission, but of constructive analysis; its universals are syntheses of differences.³⁹ In Hegel's own words:

The Notion is generally associated in our minds with abstract generality, and on that account it is often described as a general conception. We speak, accordingly, of the notions of color, plant, animal, etc. They are supposed to be arrived at by neglecting the particular features which distinguish the different colors, plants, and animals from each other, and by retaining those common to them all. This is the aspect of the Notion which is familiar to the understanding; and feeling is in the right when it stigmatizes such hollow and empty notions as mere phantoms and shadows. But the universal of the Notion is not a mere sum of features common to several things, confronted by a particular which enjoys an existence of its own. It is, on the contrary, self-particularizing or self-specifying, and with undimmed clearness finds itself at home in its antithesis. For the sake both of cognition and of our practical conduct, it is of the utmost importance that the real universal should not be confused with what is merely held in common. All those charges which the devotees of feeling make against thought, and especially against philosophic thought, and the reiterated statement that it is dangerous to carry thought to what they call too great lengths, originate in the confusion of these two things.⁴⁰

In other words, universality may mean two very different things. On the one hand, it may indicate nothing but abstract generality which is arrived at by neglecting the marks peculiar to particular objects. On the other hand, it may mean the synthetic analysis of the particulars, and so include within itself the essential characteristics of them. If one only remembers this distinction, and remembers that the true universal of thought is the subsumption, not the annihilation, of the particular, then, Hegel would say, there should be no objection raised against the assertion that ultimately the real is comprehended by thought. For, in this meaning of thought, experience and thinking experience are synonymous terms.

There are various passages in which Hegel emphasizes this aspect of thought by insisting that thought is not one mental faculty among others co-ordinate with it, but that it is the principle of universality in mind and includes within itself the other so-called mental faculties as essential elements. In his lectures on the History of Philosophy occurs a criticism of Kant which is very suggestive in this connection: 'With Kant the thinking understanding and sensuousness are both something particular,

and they are merely united in an external, superficial way, just as a piece of wood and a leg might be bound together with a cord.⁴¹ Against any such atomistic conception of the mind Hegel would insist: 'Even our sense of the mind's *living* unity naturally protests against any attempt to break it up into different faculties, forces, or, what comes to the same thing, activities, conceived as independent of each other.'⁴² But he would go further than this. Not only does he maintain that thought is not one element in an aggregate of disparate parts; he also urges that thought is rather the very life of the one organic whole which we call mind, 'its very unadulterated self'.⁴³ For example, in the smaller *Logic* he asserts that thought is present in every perception and in every mental activity.⁴⁴ 'We simply cannot escape from thought', he elsewhere says; 'it is present in sensation, in cognition, and knowledge, in the instincts, and in volition, in so far as these are attributes of a human mind.'⁴⁵ In the *Philosophy of Right* we read: 'Spirit in general is thought, and by thought man is distinguished from the animal. But we must not imagine that man is on one side thinking and on another side willing, as though he had will in one pocket and thought in another. Such an idea is vain. The distinction between thought and will is only that between a theoretical and a practical relation. They are not two separate faculties. The will is a special way of thinking; it is thought translating itself into reality; it is the impulse of thought to give itself reality.'⁴⁶ The conclusion of the whole matter is that 'in the human being there is only *one* reason, in feeling, volition, and thought'.⁴⁷

Overlooking this conception of universality in Hegel's doctrine of thought, Mr McTaggart criticizes him for holding 'that the highest activity of Spirit, in which all others are transcended and swallowed up, is that of pure thought'.⁴⁸ Such a contention, we are informed, ignores a fact which Lotze has emphasized in many parts of his system. And that fact is 'that Spirit has two other aspects besides thought – namely, volition and feeling – which are as important as thought, and which cannot be deduced from it, nor explained by it'.⁴⁹ Now this criticism assumes that Hegel actually tried to reduce the contents of mind to terms of abstract cognition. But, as we have just seen, such an assumption is entirely groundless. Hegel never thought of reducing will and feeling to knowledge, meaning by knowledge what his critic means by it, namely, one of several co-ordinate elements within the life of mind. What Hegel means by thought, when he asserts that it is conterminous with experience, is simply that principle by virtue of which experience is an organic and unitary whole. It is that life of mind itself which includes within itself feeling, will and cognition, and which finds its very being in the expression of this living unity of the mind's activity.⁵⁰ For Hegel, there is 'only *one* reason, in feeling, volition, and thought'.

After all, the difference between Hegel and his critics on this point is

not so great as might at first appear. Mr McTaggart is perfectly willing to admit that it is not impossible that these elements of mind 'might be found to be aspects of a unity which embraces and transcends them all'; but he is unwilling to call this unity thought.⁵¹ Mr Bradley, likewise, demands an ultimate synthesis; but it must fall beyond the category of rationality.⁵² Though Lotze states it as his conviction 'that the nature of things does not consist in thoughts, and that thinking is not able to grasp it', yet he goes so far as to say that 'perhaps the whole mind experiences in other forms of its action and passion the essential meaning of all being and action'.⁵³ Thus it would seem that the real quarrel between Hegel and the critics is concerning the real nature of the synthesis. What the critics vaguely term an ultimate unity Hegel prefers to call thought, reason or spirit. The former try to find a synthesis of elements which they have defined as practically exclusive and independent, though, of course, not ontologically separable from each other; and they seek this synthetic principle in feeling or intuition – something ultra-rational. Hegel, on the other hand, insists that mind is an organic unity, and that it is such only by virtue of its own most characteristic activity; it is a *one* reason. Every concrete act of knowledge, he argues, is an activity of the whole mind; and this unitary, synthetic activity can be made intelligible and given true objectivity, not, as the critics seem to maintain, in terms of intuition or feeling, but only in terms of rationality. And reflection on the point will, I think, convince us that Hegel is in the right.⁵⁴

We are now in a position to expose another aspect of the current misconception of Hegel's doctrine of universality. The misconception concerns Hegel's supposed identification of thought and being, and is, perhaps, one of the most prolific sources of adverse criticism of the Hegelian philosophy. I refer to the prevalent view, implied in the above quotations from Mr Bradley and Lotze, which Professor Seth Pringle-Pattison expresses thus:

The result of Hegel's procedure would really be to sweep 'existential reality' off the board altogether, under the persuasion, apparently, that a full statement of all the thought-relations that constitute our knowledge of the thing is equivalent to the existent thing itself. On the contrary, it may be confidently asserted that there is no more identity of Knowing and Being with an infinity of such relations than there was with one.⁵⁵

Now this idea that Hegel tried to reduce things to pure thought about things, or that he for a moment maintained that thought could possibly *be* the existent thing, seems to me a monstrous misinterpretation of his real meaning. It is inconsistent with the presupposition of his whole philosophy, namely, that reality is essentially a subject-object relation.

It is also inconsistent with the explicit statements quoted above concerning the universality of the Notion, which always involves particularity. And, as we shall see in the next chapter, he emphatically repudiates such a view in his account of mediation and the function of the negative in thought. But, apart from these facts, it seems that we might credit Hegel with sufficient acumen to see the inherent absurdity of such a position. Surely he saw the contradiction involved in an attempt to attain by thought an ideal which would result in the annihilation of thought itself. Indeed, was it not Hegel who first impressed upon us the fact that knowledge always requires an object, and that, if that object be taken away, knowledge itself ceases to be? As Professor Jones has said: 'It is inconsistent with the possibility of knowledge that it should *be* the reality it represents: knowledge is incompatible alike with sinking the real in the ideal, and the ideal in the real.'⁵⁶ And I think we are safe in saying that Hegel was well aware of this truth; his essential disagreement with Spinoza is that in the Spinozistic philosophy object is reduced to and identified with subject.

Hegel seems to have taken special pains that he should not be misunderstood on this point. The passages already quoted might be paralleled with others just as positive. I shall content myself, however, with adding only two which show, as plainly as words can show, that the author was not an advocate of the theory of abstract identity. The first of these is to be found in the eighty-second section of the smaller *Logic*:

If we say that the absolute is the unity of subjective and objective, we are undoubtedly in the right, but so far one-sided, as we enunciate the unity only and lay the accent upon it, forgetting that in reality the subjective and objective are not merely identical but also distinct.

In the *Philosophy of Mind* is found the other passage, which so well forestalls the above criticism and so forcefully emphasizes the necessity of distinguishing between merely formal identity and concrete unity that I may be pardoned for quoting it at length:

The close of philosophy is not the place, even in a general exoteric discussion, to waste a word on what a 'Notion' means. But as the view taken of this relation is closely connected with the view taken of philosophy generally and with all imputations against it, we may still add the remark that though philosophy certainly has to do with unity in general, it is not however with abstract unity, mere identity, and the empty absolute, but with concrete unity (the Notion), and that in its whole course it has to do with nothing else; that each step in its advance is a peculiar term or phase of this concrete unity, and that the deepest and last expression of unity is the unity of absolute mind

itself. Would-be judges and critics of philosophy might be recommended to familiarize themselves with these phases of unity and to take the trouble to get acquainted with them. . . . But they show so little acquaintance with them . . . that, when they hear of unity – and relation *ipso facto* implies unity – they rather stick fast at quite abstract indeterminate unity, and lose sight of the chief point of interest – the special mode in which the unity is qualified. Hence all they can say about philosophy is that dry identity is its principle and result, and that it is the system of identity. Sticking fast to the undigested thought of identity, they have laid hands on, not the concrete unity, the notion and content of philosophy, but rather its reverse.⁵⁷

If in these passages Hegel does not deny any attempt to arrive at the blank identification of thought and being, of subject and object, and if in them he does not criticize such a goal as an essentially mistaken ideal of philosophical inquiry, then so far as I am concerned the import of the passages is lost. Surely by concrete unity he means something quite different from abstract identity – and concrete unity is that with which philosophy, as he conceives it, has to do.

It seems only fair to insist that such considerations as the preceding be taken into account before Hegel is accused of attempting that which is at once impossible and absurd. He never had any idea of reducing the 'choir of heaven' and the multifarious passions of the human soul to a 'ballet of bloodless categories'. Such an attempt would have seemed to Hegel as nonsensical as it seems to his critics. When he speaks of the unity of thought and being, he always means identity in difference, and never the undifferentiated identity of Schelling's system. And when he asserts that subject comprehends object, he does not mean to reduce experience to abstract subject, as did Spinoza. He does indeed insist upon unity, but it is always upon concrete unity, the unity of the 'Notion'; and this unity does not annihilate or even harm its differences. In a word, Hegel transcends dualism, and yet, at the same time, does justice to the duality within and essential to experience. He neither denies nor attempts to explain away the factual side of experience; he simply denies that an inexplicable datum has any part or lot within experience. Not immediacy, but abstract immediacy, immediacy apart from interpretation, is unreal.

This chapter may be brought to an end by an attempt to state in one paragraph its essential points. Hegel's doctrine of thought, philosophic thought, is given in the category of absolute knowledge, which is arrived at through the procedure of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The conception is thus based directly upon our actual knowing experience, and claims to give us an account of thought as it essentially is. Thought, as here defined, is genuinely objective, transcending the relativity of individual experiences and being the determination of things as they are in themselves. But this

is not to say that reality is identical with abstract cognition. For thought finds its capacity to express the real in the fact that its universals are always the syntheses of differences, and not the blank universals of purely formal logic. Actual living thought includes within itself the data of so-called intuitive perception, of feeling, of volition, of cognition, and it is adequately conceived of only as this unifying principle of experience; it is the living unity of mind, the one reason which appears in every mental activity. Therefore, when Hegel teaches that thought is conterminous with the real, he is simply stating the doctrine that experience and reality are one.

Notes

1. This statement may be easily misconstrued and should be hedged about with reservations. Since, however, these reservations are to be developed later, I content myself here with merely calling attention to the fact. As we shall see below, the assertion that Hegel deals in the *Logic* with thought in abstraction is not equivalent to the assertion that he there deals with abstract thought. The reader is asked kindly to regard the above statement as a preliminary one, to be read in the light of what is to follow.

2. *Werke*, Bd II, p. 6.

3. *ibid.*, p. 21.

4. *ibid.*, p. 64.

5. *ibid.*, p. 67.

6. Cf. *The Origin and Significance of Hegel's Logic*, chapters VI, VII.

7. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. ciii.

8. *Op. cit.*, pp. 19–20.

9. *Werke*, Bd III, p. 32.

10. *Enc.*, §25.

11. *Philosophical Review*, Vol. VI, p. 500.

12. *Hegel und seine Zeit*, p. 255.

13. *ibid.*, p. 256.

14. Professor Baillie identifies absolute knowledge with Absolute Mind (cf. *Hegel's Logic*, pp. 186ff.), urging that in the category of absolute knowledge 'the stand-point of Absolute Mind has been fully and unequivocally adopted' (*ibid.*, p. 189). This identification seems to me, however, to contribute only to confusion. The point of interest to Hegel in the *Phenomenology* is the removal of the opposition which at first appears to exist between consciousness and its content. And this he does in the category of absolute knowledge. But when this is accomplished, we have not passed beyond the realm of finite consciousness at all; we have only seen finite consciousness in its true import. The standpoint of absolute knowledge is implicit in all finite consciousness; this fact Professor Baillie insists upon (see *ibid.*, pp. 190ff.). Why, then, baldly identify the category with the standpoint of the Absolute? If we insist on the identification here, we at least shift the emphasis from the point to be emphasized, namely, that this penetration of its object by consciousness is involved in every stage of consciousness from the sensuous up. It may be that absolute knowledge implies the existence of Absolute Mind, but this is another matter; it is simply a confusion of the point at issue here to identify the two.

15. *Werke*, Bd V, pp. 324–5.
16. *Metaphysics*, Bk I, chap. vii, §88.
17. See Haym's criticism of Hegel on this point, *op. cit.*, pp. 235ff.
18. *Enc.*, §41, lecture-note (2).
19. *Loc. cit.*
20. *Werke*, Bd IV, p. 127.
21. *Enc.*, §60, lecture-note (2).
22. *Werke*, Bd VIII, p. 63 (*Philosophy of Right*, trans., p. 37).
23. *Philosophical Review*, Vol. I, p. 135.
24. See Professor Bosanquet's discussion on this point in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1905–6, Vol. VI, pp. 237ff.
25. *Werke*, Bd V, p. 237.
26. *Werke*, Bd I, p. 178.
27. Bk III, chap. i, §309.
28. *Werke*, Bd VIII, p. 34 (*Philosophy of Right*, trans., p. 11).
29. *Philosophical Review*, Vol. VI, p. 502.
30. *Enc.*, §19.
31. *Werke*, Bd III, p. 26.
32. *ibid.*, p. 33.
33. *Enc.*, §215.
34. *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic*, §14. Compare with this conception of thought Lotze's view of thought's first activity as the process by means of which the immediately given impressions of sense are converted into ideas (*Logic*, trans., Vol. I, pp. 13ff.).
35. Cognition is 'finite' because its content has the appearance of a datum, a 'given', independent of it and existing in its own right. From the standpoint of the 'Notion', however, the content is no longer regarded as a foreign element; it is rationalized. (Cf. *Werke*, Bd V, pp. 267–8.)
36. *Werke*, Bd XII, pp. 267–8 (*Philosophy of Religion*, trans., Vol. III, p. 163).
37. *Logic*, Bk III, chap. i, §308.
38. *Principles of Logic*, p. 533.
39. See Bosanquet's *Logic*, Vol. I, pp. 63ff.
40. *Enc.*, §163, lecture-note (1).
41. *Werke*, Bd XV, p. 516 (trans., Vol. III, p. 441).
42. *Enc.*, §379.
43. *ibid.*, §11.
44. *ibid.*, §24.
45. *Werke*, Bd IX, p. 12.
46. *Werke*, Bd VIII, p. 33 (trans., p. 11).
47. *Enc.*, §471.
48. *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic*, §104.
49. *Loc. cit.*
50. See, in this connection, an article entitled 'Experience and thought' by Professor Creighton in the *Philosophical Review*, Vol. XV, pp. 482ff. 'Thinking or rationality is not limited to the process of abstract cognition, but it includes feeling and will, and in the course of its development carries these along with it. There is, of course, no such thing as what we have called abstract cognition; but the different moments are all united in the concrete experience which we may name the life of thought' (pp. 487–8).
51. Cf. especially *op. cit.*, §206.
52. Cf. *Appearance and Reality*, chap. xv.
53. *Microcosmus*, Bk VIII, chap. i, §8.

54. Mr Bradley would seem to think that discussion on this point is a matter of terminology. For example, in *Appearance and Reality*, he says that, if one chooses, one may call that fuller experience which is an adequate synthesis of the real, thought. 'But', he adds, 'if anyone else prefers another term, such as feeling or will, he would be equally justified. For the result is a whole state which both includes and goes beyond each element; and to speak of it as simply one of them seems playing with phrases' (p. 171). I am persuaded, however, that the point is more fundamental than such an attitude indicates. And I am also persuaded that he who would escape the conclusion that the abstract particular has a part in ultimate reality must ultimately concede Hegel's contention – always provided we are in earnest about equating reality with experience. See Hegel, *Werke*, Bd XI, pp. 129–30.

55. *Hegelianism and Personality*, pp. 133–4. [See above, p. 29–R.S.]. I quote from the second edition. See also McTaggart, *op. cit.*, §§194ff. To mediate the 'this', he asserts, would be to destroy it. Cf. Lotze, *Logic*, Book III, chap. i, §308.

56. *Philosophy of Lotze*, p. 273. Cf. Bosanquet, *Logic*, Vol. II, p. 207: 'In an absolute tautology which excludes or omits difference, identity itself disappears and the judgment vanishes with it.'

57. *Enc.*, §573.

Extract from *Lectures on Modern Idealism* (1919)

Josiah Royce

Lecture VI

Hegel's *Phaenomenologie des Geistes*

I

In my series of illustrations of the early idealism I now come to a work which is in many ways the most remarkable production of German philosophy between 1790 and 1810.

The *Phaenomenologie des Geistes*, despite its close relations to the general movement of thought at the time, contains a degree of originality both of conception and of execution, which sets it above any single work either of Fichte or of Schelling. In the series of its author's productions, it again stands in a very marked place, being distinctly the most original and individual of all Hegel's works. And, despite its notoriously barbarous style, which has made it the horror of the recent German historians of literature, it has very close and important relations to the literary movement of the time; and were it composed in a language which ordinary students of literature could comprehend, it would undoubtedly occupy a very notable place in the annals of the literature of the Romantic period. As the product of Hegel's early manhood it has a greater freedom of imagination and of constructive power than belongs to his later works. In its comments upon political and social problems, it shows indeed the personal temperament which always remained characteristic of Hegel, but it lacks the somewhat pedantic political conservatism which marks the treatises of the last decade of Hegel's life, composed when he was professor at Berlin, during what has been called by his enemies his 'bureaucratic' period. Because it has become customary for the modern historians of philosophy to judge Hegel by his later works, and because the political conservatism of his Berlin period and the dictatorial manner that he then assumed rendered him unpopular to the generation of

German liberals whose influence culminated in the year 1848, the *Phaenomenologie* has remained unduly neglected. Few of the textbooks of the history of philosophy give it much more than a perfunctory summary. Haym in his book *Hegel und seine Zeit* discusses the work, but with an austere lack of sympathy for what was most characteristic about it. Windelband in his *History of Modern Philosophy* speaks of it much more sympathetically, but characterizes it, not altogether unjustly, as the most difficult treatise in the history of philosophy. Difficult the *Phaenomenologie* certainly is, even if one comes to it in the right spirit. The customary aversion to the work has, however, been partly due to a failure to consider it in the right relation to the literary and social background characteristic of the time when it was produced. In only a few instances, so far as I know, have the critics of the German literature of that time seen the interest that attaches to the *Phaenomenologie* from the purely literary side. Of all the brief summaries of the book in the histories of philosophy, the sketch which Zeller gives in his *Geschichte der Deutschen Philosophie seit Leibnitz* is to my mind the best. The account of Rosenkranz in his *Life of Hegel* is decidedly valuable, although I feel that Rosenkranz himself regards the book a little too much from the point of view of its relation to Hegel's later system. It ought, I think, rather to be taken first of all as an expression of a very remarkable stage in the development of German idealism; it ought to be viewed as what it is, a very marvellous union of a rigid technical method of analysis of problems on the one hand with a remarkably free use of literary imagination and historical comments upon the other. This union is such as to make the work of distinctly unstable value for systematic philosophy. The critic who expects to find logical formulations and metaphysical doctrines, and who in fact finds many such in the book, is misled in his judgment concerning those portions of the work where Hegel indulges in the portrayal of more or less idealized characterizations of historical types, of individuals and of social movements. As these characterizations have a relation to the logical and metaphysical doctrines which is not at first sight easy to understand, the critic is likely to find these passages of character study simply incomprehensible, or to regard them as wayward interruptions of the logical development, or even, worst of all, as absurd efforts on Hegel's part to deduce *a priori* the history of man, and the psychological development of human character, from the categories of his system. On the other hand, the student who turns to the book with the interest of the historian of literature is terrified by the technical vocabulary, by the strange array of categories, by the evidences that the whole is intended to illustrate, and in some way to prove, some system regarding the universe. If the *Phaenomenologie* be viewed, therefore, with reference to the announced purpose of the author, which is to furnish an introduction to his forthcoming system of philosophy, the work

must certainly be called a failure. Few or none of its contemporary readers could have foreseen what was to be the outcome of the doctrines regarding the real world which were indicated in his introduction. Few would have felt themselves introduced to anything. For it is indeed true that the technical aspect of the work needs considerable explanation in the light of Hegel's later work. On the other hand, nobody amongst Hegel's contemporaries could have been much enlightened by the untechnical portions of the work, because these were embedded in the obscure vocabulary and in the suggestions of the metaphysical doctrines.

Despite all these things, when once we undertake to consider the *Phaenomenologie* upon its own presuppositions, we discover a great deal that remains permanently interesting. The interest is of two sorts. In the first place the *Phaenomenologie* is a study of human nature, as it is expressed in various individual and social types. From this point of view the title which William James has employed for his book, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, could well be adapted to characterize Hegel's treatise. It is so far a book describing, in serial order, some varieties of experience which, in Hegel's opinion, are at once characteristic of the general evolution of higher mental life, and are examples of the transition from common-sense naivety to philosophical reflection and to the threshold of an idealistic system. The choice of these varieties of experience, of these types of character, and of social development is for us today somewhat arbitrary. There can be no doubt that this choice is distinctly due to the state of politics and of literature and of European life generally in the years when Hegel wrote this book, namely, in the time just before the battle of Jena. Had Hegel written it at the close of his career, during the time of the political reaction which preceded 1830, he would unquestionably have chosen a different group of types. Yet there is no doubt that the human types which he actually portrays in the work are significant, are characteristic of great problems both of personal life and of society, and despite the somewhat arbitrary array in which Hegel presents these types, and despite the extremely severe criticism to which he frequently subjects them, the work done is of permanent importance and interest. In the second place, the interest of the book is in part truly philosophical. It does not fulfil its purpose of easily introducing the learner to a philosophical idealism, but it contains a very thoroughgoing application of the dialectical method, and a very important series of reflections on the problems of idealistic thought.

My own present effort to give some hints of the contents of the *Phaenomenologie* will endeavour to be just to both these interests. The actual waywardness with which Hegel combines metaphysical analysis and free portrayal of types of human character, the unquestionable difficulty of the whole discussion, the unsatisfactoriness of the entire argument, viewed as a systematic presentation of idealistic doctrines, the arbitrariness of this

singular union of imaginative construction, psychological portrayal and metaphysical reasoning – all this I shall recognize; and yet I shall try to indicate how significant the book is, when rightly taken. In order to view it fairly, you have to treat it, I think, as a whole genus of highly original literary and speculative works and authors should be treated. It is with the *Phaenomenologie* as it is with Schopenhauer, with Nietzsche, with Walt Whitman, with Browning. In dealing with such original and occasionally crabbed instances of genius, people are far too often divided into the blind followers who worship the master or his book, because of the eccentricities of both, and the blind opponents who can see nothing but barbarism or waywardness, because this type of genius happens to express itself in unconventional fashion. People usually think that you must be either a worshipper or an opponent – perhaps in the latter case an out-and-out despiser – of a Browning, of a Walt Whitman, or in our own day of a Tolstoi. For my part I think that such writers and their works must be treated with the same freedom which they themselves exemplify. They worship nobody, and stand for themselves. Let us follow their example, so far as they themselves are concerned. In the presence of the wayward, I too may be free to judge in my own individual way. On the other hand, it is folly not to recognize how much such people and such work may mean to us, if we learn to appreciate them, not as finalities, but as individual expressions of highly significant life and thought.

II

In the case of the *Phaenomenologie*, we must approach the work by reminding ourselves of the historical position which it occupies. The noteworthy expressions of the early idealism were formulated by a group of men most of whom were at some time at the University of Jena. Here Fichte taught between 1794 and the time when his famous controversy, due to a charge of atheism made against him, drove him from the place. Here Schelling's early works were produced. Hegel, who was five years older than Schelling and who had been a fellow student of Schelling at Tübingen, was thirty years old in 1800. In this year he came, after a long period of preparation during which he had lived largely as a private tutor, to the University of Jena as *Privat-Dozent*. He was at first understood to be a disciple of Schelling, and while he never admitted the fact, his early publications were for a time distinctly upon Schelling's side. In company with Schelling, Hegel for a time edited a philosophical journal. In 1806, the battle of Jena put a temporary stop to Hegel's opportunities at the University. In 1807, the *Phaenomenologie*, considerably delayed in publication by the troubles of the time, made its appearance. For some years thereafter Hegel was obliged to engage in other than academic occupations. Not until 1812 did he gain a place as professor of philosophy

at Heidelberg, where he remained until his transfer to Berlin. The *Phaenomenologie* is, thus, subsequent to the publication of Schelling's principal useful works. It presupposes readers acquainted with the problems of recent idealism; and as already indicated, it treats even highly trained students with great severity. With very little explanation, Hegel at once introduces a distinctly new and decidedly complex philosophical vocabulary, whose meaning one is to discover mainly from the uses to which he applies it – his own deliberate opinion being that philosophical terminology can only be perfectly defined by means of considerations which can first occur to mind only at that point in the portrayal system where the vocabulary comes to be needed. Moreover, what the German historians of literature have called the barbarism of Hegel's language was due partly, as I understand, to his Suabian habits of speech, and partly to his efforts to translate all philosophical terminology that could be so treated out of Latin and Greek into a German vocabulary – an undertaking in which he showed a characteristic awkwardness. Pedagogically speaking, Hegel is distinctly austere. The learner shall adjust himself to the master. The master does comparatively little to smooth the learner's way.

The philosophical presuppositions of the book which the reader is to have in mind he now superficially knows. The world of reality is to be defined in terms of whatever constitutes the true nature and foundation of the self. The categories of thought are to be deduced in the double sense with which we are now familiar. That is, one is to undertake what Kant attempted in his deduction of the categories, i.e. the proof that phenomena must in form be subject to the laws of thought. One must also undertake to show by a systematic development what the forms of thought are. The book intends that the reader shall be interested in such an undertaking and shall be in general prepared to investigate the problem of life and of nature from this idealistic point of view. The method of the *Phaenomenologie* involves the demand that the reader should be pretty well acquainted with modern philosophical literature. Hegel does not cite his predecessors by name. He persistently uses the form of mere allusion; and since many of his allusions are to essays and discussions which are no longer in the forefront of our historical consciousness, we are constantly baffled in our efforts to see the force of the allusions themselves.

Meanwhile Hegel is convinced of the fundamental importance of the dialectical method. In his mind, this method has become much more systematic and elaborate than it was in the hands of Fichte, decidedly more conscious and explicit as an instrument of philosophical thought than it was for Schelling. In the *Phaenomenologie* the dialectical method appears from the start in what I have before called its pragmatic form. The antithetical stages, the contradictory phases through which imperfect thought passes, and inevitably passes, on its way towards truth, are to

be viewed in this book as constituting a series of stages which are represented both in the history of science and in the history of civilization. For philosophy the dialectical method will be the portrayal of the nature and development of the thinking process. But this thinking process will go through a series of phases corresponding to the successive stages of various processes, such as occur in the lives of individuals and of nations. As these stages are represented in personal and in social life, they will, in general, be bound up with forms of activity and of emotion, with human passions and conflicts. What in the logical philosophy appears as a conflict of categories, of points of view, of theses and antitheses will appear in human life as a conflict of moral and of social tendencies, of opinions for which men make sacrifices, upon which they stake their fortunes. The conflicts of philosophical ideas will thus appear as a kind of shadowy repetition, or representation, of the struggles of humanity for life and for light. The thesis that history itself is a dialectical process gets its relative justification from that dialectical character of the will upon which I have insisted in previous lectures. It is easy to say that in Hegel's treatment of his ethico-logical parallelism, as one might call it, he becomes a formalist, and often appears to falsify history by interpreting its catastrophes and its warfare in terms of the categories of his system. But this offence, in so far as it can be charged against Hegel, is much less present in the *Phaenomenologie* than in his much later lectures on the philosophy of history. For the *Phaenomenologie* uses so much freer a method of illustrating philosophy by history, pretends so little to being a literal reproduction of past events, undertakes so obviously the task of merely expressing in its own way the spirit, the general sense, the outline of historical processes that Hegel is here much less definitely committed than he was later to the theory that history is a literal expression in life of the categories of the philosophical logic.

On the contrary, the *Phaenomenologie* unites logic and history rather by means of a reducing of the thinking process to pragmatic terms than by means of a false translation of real life into the abstract categories of logic. It becomes manifest throughout the work that, for Hegel, thought is inseparable from will, that logic exists only as the logic of life, and the truth, although in a sense that we shall hereafter consider absolute, exists only in the form of a significant life process, in which the interests and purposes both of humanity and of the Absolute express themselves. The deduction of the categories of the thinking process, in so far as it is suggested in this work, is dialectical. It is based upon the method of antithesis, a method possessing for Hegel pragmatic significance and illustrating the way in which men live as well as the way in which men must think.

I have indicated in a most general way the philosophical interest to which the *Phaenomenologie* appeals – an interest in the new idealism, in

the Kantian deduction of the categories, in the use of the dialectical method as the truly philosophical method, and in the relation of philosophy to life, of thought and will. But for this very reason Hegel conceived, as he planned this work, that an introduction to philosophy might take the form of a portrayal of a series of stages, that is varieties of consciousness and of life, through which the mind proceeds as it passes from its natural and primal conditions towards philosophical insight. These stages Hegel is disposed to view as at once philosophically necessary and capable of historical illustration in the lives of individuals and of society. The parallelism of logic and of history, of the dialectical process and of the evolution of humanity, appears to him of service as aiding in the introduction of the learner to philosophy. That in working out the theory of this parallelism Hegel is unsuccessful, that the unprepared reader is confounded rather than led to a correct appreciation of his philosophy – this is simply Hegel's fortune as a teacher. It is his personal characteristic always to make a learner's first impression of his doctrines as puzzling as possible. He can enlighten you only after he has first, like a severe elder relative, long worried you. The actual view regarding the nature of this parallelism becomes clear only to one who knows more about the spirit of the Hegelian doctrine than the first readers of this book could have known.

Granting, however, that Hegel's system can be introduced through a study of this parallelism of logic and real life, the first problem to be solved by Hegel lay in the fact that the forms or types of consciousness which he wishes to portray appear to him to be in part stages which the moral development of an individual person will exemplify, and in part stages which the evolution of society embodies. In our sketch of Schelling we have already seen how, according to that philosopher, the stages of self-expression of the principle called the self are partly individual, partly social and partly impersonal. Hegel had learned from Schelling to view the expressions of the self as indeed a series of stages, logically connected, but differing in the way in which they emphasize impersonal and personal, individual and social types of consciousness. Hegel is decidedly less interested than Schelling in a philosophical comprehension of external nature, his own very vast erudition mainly related to literary, philosophical, historical and social aspects of human life, so it is natural that his *Phaenomenologie* should be built up especially on the lines suggested by what he takes to be logically significant forms and series of personal and of social experience. It is a natural device to present the individual and the social types in two divisions, united by the fact that the individual types as such are repeated, although upon higher and more significant levels, when the individual is viewed as he ought to be, namely, in conjunction with the social order with which every phrase of individual consciousness is always in fact connected.

III

But still another and different consideration has to be mentioned in order that the structure of the *Phaenomenologie* be understood. This consideration has been singularly overlooked by most of those who have given an account of the work. Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* had made prominent at that time a type of romance which is now no longer familiar to our readers of current literature, although it is a type which is not without its imitations in English literature. Readers of former periods were well acquainted with the form in question as it appeared in several different European literatures. What I have in mind may still better be suggested if I ask you to compare *Wilhelm Meister* with Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*. I refer to the romance whose hero is interesting to us principally as a type, not so much as an elementally attractive personality. It readily lent itself to the didactic purpose, and therefore from the romance of this type to the philosophical treatise there is an indefinitely graded series of intermediate forms, such as *Sartor Resartus* suggests to our minds. Such romances are prone to lay stress upon some significant process of evolution, through which the hero passes. He himself represents a type of personal experience, or development of character. The effect of such work is rather to present to us the world, or some portion of it, as seen from a typical or characteristic, and in so far personal point of view, rather than to interest us directly in the passions or in the tragedy or comedy of the hero's life. In the German literature of this period numerous instances appear of various grades of importance. Novalis in his *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* undertook to sketch the career of a typical romantic poet, such as Novalis himself hoped to be. The romance remained unfinished. It is said to have been one of a series which Novalis planned. Each one of the series was to present a special type of personality. In the mentioned romance, as you see, the interest lies in the fact that the hero is the ideal poet, and less in the fact that he is an individual of elemental significance such as Macbeth or Romeo might possess. Art, to be sure, is always of the typical, but in work of this kind the type is chosen in cold blood, and the hero is created to fill, as it were, a somewhat abstractly defined order or demand. In art of the other sort, the hero is an individual, and becomes a type merely by virtue of the inherent and perhaps unconscious requirements of the artist's genius. Goethe's *Faust* is an individual first and a type only as a result of the greatness of the creation. But *Wilhelm Meister* is rather a typical process of natural development than primarily a personality. Ludwig Tieck had more than once used the form of the type-romance, created to present an illustration of a plan of development, or of decadence. Thus his early work, *William Lovell*, is on the whole a type-romance. Now under the influence of the literary habits of the time, it unquestionably occurred to

Hegel to make his portrayal of what he calls the experience of the *Geist*, or typical mind of the race, something that could be narrated in a story, or in a connected series of stories in which typical developments are set forth. The *Phaenomenologie* therefore appears on the one hand as a sort of biography of the world-spirit – a biography in which instead of concrete events one has only the comedies and tragedies of the inner life, and these depicted rather as fortunes which occur to ideas, to purposes, if you choose, to categories, than as occurrences in the ordinary world. The name ‘world-spirit’, *Weltgeist*, which Hegel sometimes uses, and which became current in the later idealistic literature, means much the same as the term ‘self’ which we have employed throughout this discussion, in a universal sense. Only the term ‘world-spirit’ is explicitly allegorical. It refers to the self, viewed as the subject to whom historical or other human events and processes occur, so that it is as if this world-spirit lived its life by means of, or suffered and enjoyed its personal fortunes through these historical and individual processes. The world-spirit, then, is the self viewed metaphorically as the wanderer through the course of history, the incarnate god to whom the events of human life may be supposed to happen, or if you will the divinity in disguise, like Wotan the Wanderer. The term is never a technically philosophical term. But it is very frequently employed in this somewhat metaphorical sense by philosophers.

Well, the *Phaenomenologie* may be viewed, then, as the biography of the world-spirit; and somewhat in this sense Hegel conceives the plan of all except the introductory portion of his work. This life of the world-spirit consists, however, of a series of what we have called stages, and these may be compared to different incarnations or transmigrations, as it were, of the world-spirit – an interpretation which Hegel never, I think, explicitly mentions, although one passage in his Preface strongly suggests the thought. The passage uses, with regard to the world-spirit, Hamlet’s word addressed to his father’s ghost: ‘What, ho, old mole, canst work in the earth so fast?’ For so, says Hegel, one is sometimes tempted to say on observing through what toilsome and underground pathways of hard-won experience the spirit seems to find its way through the history of humanity to the light of reason. A frequent suggestion of this interpretation is furnished by the fact that Hegel is often describing the typical point of view which we know has received, or is receiving, its expression solely through some one person, or class of persons, whose life or lives are in the natural world wholly confined to the expression of this one phase of consciousness. Such individuals cannot rise above just that stage. Nevertheless, at the close of such a stage, Hegel speaks of ‘consciousness’ as passing on to the next higher stage, which in such cases may be represented in the human world as we know it by wholly different individuals. The metaphor of a transmigration becomes, under these circumstances, almost inevitable as we try to follow what happens. The term

used by Hegel for these various typical stages in the progress of consciousness, or of the world-spirit, is *Gestalten des Bewusstseins*, that is forms of consciousness. These forms, however, are often sharply individuated, treated as if they were persons – heroes such as are portrayed in *Wilhelm Meister* or in *Sartor Resartus*. They have their fortunes, their confident beginning, when they are sure of themselves and of their own truth, their conflicts, their enemies, their tragedy, or on occasion their comedy of contradiction, their downfall, and their final suggestion of some higher form that in a new life is to spring out of them. Side by side with this deliberate personification of an idea there runs through the text an elaborate dialectical analysis; this quasi-biography of an incarnation of the world-spirit is associated with a logical criticism of a typical opinion, or of the rationality of a certain resolution or motive or mental attitude – all this is characteristic of the baffling, but deliberate, method of the world. The presentation is very generally saved from mere pedantry, such as an elaborate logical analysis of what is all the time viewed as a live creature might readily entail. It is saved by the novelty of the mode of treatment, by the remarkable union of a sensitive appreciation with a merciless critical analysis; in brief, by the author's genius and by his genuine philosophical interest.

The usual character of the biography of any one of these *Gestalten* is as follows. Each expresses an attitude, an idea, and so a mode of behaviour, a reaction towards the world, which at each stage appears inevitably to grow out of previous stages. Any such stage of consciousness presents itself, therefore, as inevitable, as rational, as the only way to live and to think, as *the* interpretation, of life, of thought and of the universe. As a fact, so Hegel frequently assures us, each of these forms expresses in its own way, and according to its own lights, the genuine nature of the self. Within its own limits, each of these forms *is* the truth. It possesses in general 'the certainty that it is all reality'. As a fact, however, it implies some sort of contrast between a subjective and an objective aspect, present either within what it regards as itself or in its relation to what it regards as its external world. In other words, each of these forms exemplifies some aspect of the problem of self-consciousness, some aspect of the problem as to the relation between thought and reality. And this problem also appears in every such case as having more or less of practical, of passionate, or at least of significant and interesting value. The theoretical problems always appear as also life problems. The *Gestalt* in question, the *Weltgeist* thus incarnate, first becomes aware of its problem by noting that it has not yet fully and consciously expressed, and found, what it means. Is it a contemplative observer of facts? Then it has not yet seen just how these facts are related to its own nature. Is it rather a practical attitude towards the world, an attitude of ambition, of protest, of rebellion, of reform? Then it has not yet carried out its

work. It must proceed to fight its battle and to express itself. As the *Gestalt* thus undertakes the work of its little life, or on higher stages, of its world-wide expression, it at once must develop what is within and come in conflict with what is without. The result is, often enough, so far as this *Gestalt* is concerned, either comic or tragic in the resulting dialectic. The calm confidence of its beginning, or, so to speak, of its youth, turns as it proceeds into disappointment, into contradiction, into a more or less logical repentance. Its ideas prove to be fantastic; its supposed facts turn out to be dreams. Its sincerity is exposed through the experience of life and through a merciless self-criticism, and then proves to be, sometimes self-deception, sometimes hypocrisy, frequently both. The destiny of its life is determined on the whole by a formula characteristic of Hegel's view of the dialectic method. Its external conflicts with the world that it views as its object or as other than itself turn out to be also essentially internal conflicts. That is for its own difficulties, it blames the world at first, but discovers that the fault is its own. On the other hand, its internal diremption, its inner contradiction, always expresses itself in external conflicts. And just this unity of the external and internal is what furnishes the positive result of the process which upon each stage is carried out. What the *Gestalt* has falsely regarded as its own proves to be due to what it had thought to be the utterly foreign world. On the other hand, whatever it finds in its world proves to be in turn the development, or the expression, of its own nature. Hence its failure implies a reconstruction of the view regarding itself and its world, with which it had begun. What it had called its own comes to seem foreign to it. What it had called utterly remote, and merely a not-self, turns out to be its own flesh and blood. In its own special form, then, this typical incarnation of the world-spirit passes away. But it gives place to an enriched view of the nature of things, which takes form in some new type of consciousness.

As the reader follows this series of typical forms of consciousness, he is constantly impressed with the mercilessly negative criticism which at every stage greets whatever at the outset seems most individual of each *Gestalt*, and most sacred from its point of view. That in developing such an attitude Hegel is constantly inspired by a sense of the stern judgment that life and history in his day had passed upon human illusion and upon false efforts is obvious enough. But the criticism in question is characteristic of the philosopher's own technical method. As dialectician, as expositor of contradictions, as negative adept in reflection, Hegel has learned from Socrates, from the Platonic dialogues, from the Kantian antinomies, from Fichte and from Schelling's joyous fondness for paradoxes. The negative procedure, on its technical side, is deliberate, minute and often wearisome. It is represented at each stage by the philosopher not as his own external comment but as the internal development and

experience of the *Gestalt* in question. But the reader learns to feel a sympathy for each successive incarnation of the *Weltgeist*, as conscious in the beginning of its own universal and divine mission, it sets out upon its career of world conquest, arrayed with all the spoils that have been accumulated by the labours of its predecessors, only to find itself ere long fast bound in the net of its own contradictions, and ending its days like a blinded Samson, a victim to the Philistines who are, after all, in this idealistic world, only its own thoughts. As a fact, Hegel regards and expressly proclaims the principle of what he here calls 'negativity' as the principle both of the world process and of philosophical logic. Thus the dialectical method reaches in this work an explicitness not previously known in philosophical literature. But it must not be supposed that Hegel himself viewed this process as purely negative. In his Introduction to the work, and repeatedly in the course of his discussion, he points out that each of these negative discoveries, however tragic from the point of view of the life, that is of the idea or opinion or attitude concerned, is in fact also a positive discovery, a new revelation as to the interrelation of mind and of things, a new proof that in the realm of experience subject and object are not to be sundered, and that their unity develops out of the very conflicts which appear to exist between them so long as their relations are imperfectly appreciated.

Rosenkranz in his biography of Hegel narrates an oft-cited story of how in later years, when Hegel was at Heidelberg, a company of students to whom he was one evening in private conversation expounding some aspects and results of the dialectic method, listened with a certain terror to the apparently destructive attack upon various traditional views; so that when Hegel at length rose and left, one of the students exclaimed, as he watched the retreating figure, 'That is nobody but death himself, and so must everything pass away' ('Das sei der Tod selber, und so müsse alles vergehen'). Another who was present had caught the positive undertone and outcome of the discussion, and expressed himself more cheerfully. As a fact, it was Hegel's characteristic view that all such negations mean, when viewed as it were from above, the inner self-differentiation of the life of the spirit, the enrichment of its existence through manifold finite expressions, which in their very variety and mutual opposition supplement one another, and together express the totality of a true life. The truth, says Hegel, in the Introduction to the *Phaenomenologie*, 'is the whole'. And because the truth is the whole, the utmost power of negation is powerless to prevent the world-spirit from coming to life in new forms, or from expressing, through the higher wealth which these new forms contain, the positive results which, for Hegel, are the inevitable outcome of the lower stages.

IV

We are now prepared to sketch a little more connectedly the way in which the *Phaenomenologie* is built up. In the course of the Preface which has become famous as the first formal statement of the programme of the coming Hegelian system of philosophy, Hegel announces that instead of beginning his proposed system with a direct account of the proof, he undertakes to prepare the way for philosophy by recounting the experience through which consciousness passes from naive to philosophical insight. The plan of defining a series of *Gestalten* is outlined. The relation of the logical examination of these stages to their character as forms present in the course of the life-history of humanity is set forth. By the word 'consciousness' Hegel means a mental process, in so far as it stands over against and opposed to some sort of fact or object. He defines in general the problem of consciousness as the problem of determining its own relation to its object. This relation cannot be determined without passing through a succession of views in which both the consciousness in question and the object of this consciousness are altered through reflection and through an experience of the problems of the situation. Consciousness, as he indicates in beginning the enterprise, will appear upon four distinct stages. First it appears as mere consciousness, that is as the knowing process which finds a world of facts over against it, and which simply examines these facts to find what is certain or true about them. The second is the stage of self-consciousness, that is of the essentially idealistic view, which regards its object as in some wise the expression of itself. The third is the stage of reason, in which the objects of consciousness exist as the relatively impersonal embodiment of ideas, but in such wise that this highly categorized world is regarded by the self as still identical in principle with its own constitution, so that the attitude of consciousness is expressible thus: there is indeed a world, and a real one, but this world is essentially mine, to comprehend by my science, or to conquer by my will, in short, to possess, not as my private caprice, but as my universally valid truth. The fourth stage of consciousness is called *Geist*, that is mind or spirit, in its fully concrete or explicit sense. The world of the spirit is the world which consists not only of my universally valid truth, but of my conscious truth, as is expressed by a social order to which I belong, by a humanity in whose life I take part. At the summit of the world of the spirit, as its absolute expression, appears a form or series of forms of consciousness, which in the table of contents of the *Phaenomenologie* is formally sundered from the *Geist* proper, that is from the social type of consciousness. This is the consciousness of what one might call the super-social or religious realm, the last realm where consciousness pauses before it becomes explicitly and reflectively philosophical.

In treating the first of these forms, namely, *Bewusstsein*, or simple consciousness, Hegel makes no attempt at introducing the quasi-biographical form which we have discussed in the foregoing. This, which is the introductory discussion of the text, contains an elaborate dialectical proof of the general thesis of idealism. The ground covered is somewhat similar to that which one finds covered in Fichte and in Schelling, although the argument is decidedly novel. The text is here, especially at a first reading, extremely difficult, and has unquestionably served to render the book esoteric, from the point of view of most readers. What is characteristic of the *Phaenomenologie* begins with the second stage, with self-consciousness. Hegel's treatment is here founded upon the thought that, although a technical idealism is confined to the philosophers, every human being is practically, that is in what we might now call the pragmatic sense, an idealist. For it is of the nature of a rational being to assert himself as the central reality of the world, and then to attempt to interpret all that he finds in terms of his own interests. So herewith the union of logical analysis with typical portrayal of human character and destiny begins. The first stage of self-consciousness is represented by the naive individualism of the child or of the savage. The movement present upon this stage is determined by the fact upon which Fichte and Schelling had insisted, by the fact that the self, in order to be individual, must needs be, however crudely, social, that is must know itself by contrast with the other. Hence the first expression of self-consciousness in the form of crude individualism observes itself by virtue of contrast with the other self who appears as the intruder and disturber, that is as false self in the world of the savage individual. 'I am self; but who are you?' Such is the attitude in terms of which the savage, or the boy, greets the stranger. Hence the natural condition of the crude self is indeed one of warfare with its kind. This primitive stage, essentially self-destructive, quickly gives place to stages of self-consciousness which involve still crude but intense forms of higher individualism. As the self grows, its world becomes more complex; and at the stage of reason we pass to forms of consciousness which are still individual, but which appear with a highly rational or elaborately categorized world over against them, in which they seek their victory or their task, in terms which are not only individualistic, but also explicitly universal, so that each *Gestalt* seeks what it views as that which all the world is seeking. The world of *Geist* next appears as a series of incarnations of the self, which are no longer individual, but explicitly universal, and also social. In other words, these *Gestalten* are now entire societies, nations, stages of culture, or on higher levels, movements of thought and of general social action – reforms, reconstitutions of society, institutions possessing spiritual significance.

The chronological relations which these various forms are conceived to have involve a complication only gradually explained in the text; the

Gestalten of self-consciousness and of reason are contemporaneous with those of the *Geist*. That is, there are certain forms of individuality which are found in, and are characteristic of, certain social types; and which therefore in time appear along with the latter. But for the sake of the dialectical analysis, the forms of self-consciousness and of reason are analysed before the forms of the *Geist*. A similar link connects certain forms of the religious consciousness with certain stages in the history of the *Geist*. Yet the forms of the religious consciousness are never treated in their entirety until after the forms of the social mind have been successively presented.

So much for a first sketch of the plan of the *Phaenomenologie*. Its outcome, viewed as a dialectical achievement, is to be the definition of a form of consciousness which is to be identical with the philosophical consciousness itself. Philosophy appears, in Hegel's account, as the result of the lesson of the world's history. Yet this result does not depend merely upon transcending, but upon including all the forms of experience and of self-expression which have been learned by the way. The philosophical definition of the nature of the self, and of its relation to the world, will be possible only upon the basis of an appreciation of the forms under which the self expresses itself in the history of humanity. The lesson of history will be transformed by philosophy into the law of logic. Yet on the other hand, the logical development is dependent upon, and in its own abstract way will repeat, the development that the mind gets, through practical conflict with the world and with itself. The history of the human will, and of its purification through conflict and through tragedy, will be reflected in the realm of pure thought in the sequence of categories, and in the definition of truth.

Fichte, as you remember, had defined an ethical idealism. Schelling had added an effort to unify idealism and natural history, and had found the culmination of his doctrine at the moment when he wrote the work which we at the last time reviewed, in a philosophy of art. Hegel begins by conceiving that the logic of history, or more generally, the logic of human activity and of the human will, is a natural preliminary to the comprehension of theoretical truth.

Lecture IX

Hegel's Mature System

Thus far, in our studies of Schelling's and of Hegel's early works, we have been illustrating the rise and, as one might say, the youth of the idealistic movement. We have examined some of the motives and methods of this youthful period of idealism; we have contended with some of its difficulties. We have seen some of the relations of the philosophers to

the civilization of that age. We must now make an attempt to indicate the form in which philosophical idealism reached its first maturity in the system of Hegel.

I

After Hegel published the *Phaenomenologie des Geistes*, he was for some years forced by the political consequences of the battle of Jena to abandon his work as a teacher of philosophy. He continued, however, his efforts to formulate his system, and in 1812 began the publication of his *Logik*. Not until 1816 was he able to begin work as professor of philosophy at Heidelberg. In 1818 he passed over to Berlin, where his career was continued until his death in 1831. It was at Berlin that he soon became the recognized leader of a school; and for years his philosophy had an almost overwhelming prominence in the universities of Germany.

The completed system of Hegel was outlined, during his life, in his systematic treatise called the *Encyclopaedie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*. Here he appears as one attempting, like a modern Aristotle, the task of surveying the total result of human knowledge with reference to its unification in terms of an idealistic philosophy.

It will be of interest to consider briefly in what spirit Hegel attempted this unification. You well know, by this time, the main conditions which an idealistic philosopher must have in mind in such an undertaking. For an idealist the field of human knowledge is, as you will remember, no mere report of the structure of a world that exists in itself, apart from all our knowledge. On the contrary, our knowledge, whatever else it is, is an expression of ourselves. It is a revelation of the true nature of the human reason. If such an idealistic philosophy succeeds in giving an account of the universe, it will therefore show that our human reason is in unity with the ultimate nature of things. That is, it will teach that this human reason is itself the embodiment, in various individual lives, processes, investigations, practical activities, opinions, theories – the embodiment, I say, of an Absolute Reason, while the world is the creation of this Absolute. The outcome of the *Phaenomenologie* has already indicated to us how, in Hegel's view, this embodiment of an Absolute Reason in the form of our human consciousness is to be interpreted. Let us review this outcome sufficiently to see how the resulting system of philosophy must be expressed, in case such a system is possible at all.

The first result of the *Phaenomenologie* which here concerns us is the thesis that human error and human finitude are themselves a necessary part of the expression of the absolute truth. To assert this thesis is characteristic of Hegel's form of idealism, and the whole system centres about this proposition. The proposition itself is identical with the assertion that the dialectical method is the true method of philosophy. When you begin to philosophize, you seek, very properly, to escape from errors

and to find the truth just as it is. Hence errors, defective points of view, false opinions seem to you simply regrettable incidents which you wish to escape. When later you discover, as Kant wishes you to do, that human thought is through and through burdened with tendencies to error, that phenomena only are known to you, not pure truth, you feel as if the purpose of philosophy had wholly failed. But Hegel undertakes to show that truth can only be defined by taking account, as it were, of a certain necessary totality of defective or erroneous points of view. Or again, Hegel's account of the world might be defined as an assertion that the necessary and unified totality of the phenomena is itself the absolute truth; so that there is indeed no truth to seek beyond the phenomena, while nevertheless no single phenomenon, and no finite set or circle of phenomena, can constitute the truth. Errors, then, are but partial views of the truth. The partiality of such views is indeed regrettable, in case you remain fast bound in and by such a partial point of view. But if you learn to view the partial truths in their setting, then you see that without the partial truths the totality of the truth would be impossible; or, in terms of the dialectical method, you see that without the errors, the truth would be impossible. As Hegel boldly expressed the situation, in the metaphorical language characteristic of his early period, and of his *Phaenomenologie*, 'The truth is the Bacchanalian revel, wherein every one of the finite forms of the truth appears as an intoxicated illusion' ('*Die Wahrheit ist der Bacchantische Taumel, worin alle Gestalten trunken sind*'). No view of the nature of truth could appear more absurd if you approach the system unsympathetically, and from without. And that is why Hegel hoped to prepare the way for his system by writing the *Phaenomenologie* as an introduction. According to this book, common sense is, as a fact, dialectical and self-refuting, since it asserts the existence of a world of fact independently of its own thoughts, while common sense is still unable to define or to describe this external world except in terms of the categories of its own thought. So far Kant's analysis inevitably brings us, as we deal with the problems that lead us over to idealism. Meanwhile, common sense, while thus theoretically at war with its own anti-idealistic conceptions, is all the while, in Hegel's opinion, practically idealistic, since every one of us naturally views the world as centred about his own personality, and conceives the nature of things pragmatically, that is as possessing reality precisely in so far as this nature of things has value for his own conduct. Hence the common-sense point of view at once says, 'The facts are the facts, whatever I may think', and also adds, 'What I have to conceive as true I must regard as true; for otherwise I have no basis for action, and no plan of conduct.'

Yet common sense, self-contradictory as it is, is an absolutely inevitable beginning for philosophy. Whatever truth we are to come to see must, then, come to our knowledge through a process which involves, not the

abandonment, but the supplementing of common sense – not the dropping of those errors which inevitably reassert themselves whenever we move about as we do in the world of common sense, but the enlarging of our consciousness through an insight which shows those errors to be a necessary aspect and moment of the absolute truth.

Not only is the point of view of common sense thus at once erroneous and necessary – a way to the truth, though leading through the very labyrinth where the monster of error dwells – but the same character of the truth, the same relative justification of error, has appeared at every stage of that progress of consciousness of which the *Phaenomenologie* is supposed to be the record. The series of stages of consciousness which Hegel has traced is, according to him, substantially inevitable. It is indeed not necessary that the individual man should in each case literally repeat in his personal life the march over the long road of error through which the human race has so far found its way. That is, the individual man need not first, like the savage, kill his enemies in order to learn how self-assertion is possible only in social forms; he need not be a master or a slave, a monk or a Faust, an anarchist or a loyal subject of an ancient Greek commonwealth in order to learn the truth that was incorporated in each of these forms of life. But that is because, these forms of life having actually expressed their truth and having paid the penalty of their errors, each by asserting itself, and then by passing away, the individual man can learn their lesson in a more or less abstract way, and so can use this lesson in defining higher grades of insight. Hegel, however, insists that without the actual expression, in living form, of the lower type of consciousness, the higher type could not find its own expression. The essence of this higher life is to be the truth of the lower stages; and so in general it is of the essence of all truth to be the truth of some error, the goal which that error was seeking. Hence the Absolute exists only as the truth of the lower and of the relative; the infinite exists only as the truth of the finite; the perfect can be real only as the fulfilment of what is sought by the imperfect.

II

A second result of the *Phaenomenologie* is, in Hegel's opinion this: since each imperfect stage of consciousness is an interpretation of the whole real universe from some limited or finite point of view, and since each such interpretation is led over from its own lower stage to the next higher stage of consciousness by a process of what might be called immanent self-criticism – a process whereby each stage comes to a self-consciousness regarding its own purposes and its own meaning – it follows that the method of philosophy must consist in a deliberate and systematic development of this very mode of self-criticism of the processes and attitudes of consciousness. In the *Phaenomenologie* we found that Hegel simply

accepted from experience the historical fact that certain types of human character, of social life and of religious consciousness exist or have existed. We found him, after accepting from without, as it were, these forms, thereupon applying his dialectical method to each of them in succession, and so showing how each form was dialectical and was therefore inadequate to express its own inmost purposes. We then found him at the close of such dialectical history of a stage of consciousness looking about him, as it were, in experience and in history for a form or type of consciousness which should express some higher phase of the truth and of insight. Such an application of the dialectical method characterized his introduction to philosophy. But herewith we found indeed but a fragmentary expression of what, to Hegel's mind, the dialectical method must become when applied to the proper business of the philosophical system itself. The change which must characterize, for such a thinker, the transition from his introduction to his finished system thus becomes fairly obvious.

The system of Hegel must do for our fundamental ideas of truth, for the necessary categories of the mind and for the answering of our various questions about truth and reality what the *Phaenomenologie* undertook to do for the various stages whereby the human mind has approached the philosophical point of view itself. Has our thought a certain necessary nature? Are our true categories only the expression of some one fundamental principle of reason? Is the nature of things an expression of the reason? Is the variety of human selves an inevitable manifestation of the one Absolute Reason? Are nature and mind different stages in the manifestation of this one reason? Such, as you know, are the questions which a system of Hegel's type proposes to answer in the affirmative. And you are now prepared to understand, at least in a general way, the motives which led Hegel to undertake this answer by means of a repeated and, in fact, an unweariedly persistent application and reapplication of his dialectical method.

Hegel, like his predecessors, conceives the whole nature of things as due to the very principle which is expressed in the self. But now, as the *Phaenomenologie* has especially taught us, the self, in Hegel's opinion, is through and through a dialectical being. It lives by transcending and even thereby including its own lower manifestations. Every finite form that it can take exists only to be transcended, but even thereby exists to be included in the self's complete life. The self sins, but only to repent its own sin, by attaining through this very repentance a renewed moral vigour. It dies; but only to rise on stepping stones of its dead selves to higher things. It errs, in order thereby to illustrate the truth which is richer than the error. The *Phaenomenologie* has merely illustrated this general process. The mature system shall define the same process in exact and technical terms, and in these very terms shall apply the resulting

conception of the self to explaining the whole world as due to the very principle which the self embodies. This, then, is Hegel's philosophical ideal.

III

Meanwhile, as we also know, this form of idealism will undertake to deduce the variety of the categories of our thought from a single principle. And this principle, in Hegel's case, will again be the self. Consequently Hegel will attempt to show how the various fundamental conceptions which the human mind uses in the processes exemplified by the various sciences are themselves stages in the formation and in the expression of self-consciousness. These stages will be united in a series by ties of the same sort as those which, in the *Phaenomenologie*, bound together the various *Gestalten des Bewusstseins*. The various categories of our human thought, such as being, change, quality, quantity, measure, thing, property, content, form, internal, external, causality, substance – the fundamental conceptions, in brief, which we use in our various sciences as our tools for comprehending the nature of things – these will be, for Hegel, one and all of them stages in the self-expression of our thoughtful activity – *Gestalten*, as it were, of the thinker's life. Each category will be necessary in its place and for its own purpose. But no one of them, by itself, will have absolute validity, unless indeed the name for their total system, the *Idee* itself as the *Absolute Idee*, shall be viewed as itself one of these categories. Each category, each idea such as quality, quantity etc. shall be limited – a necessary, but an abstract, and in so far as it is merely abstract, an untrue expression of the total nature of things. As the master or the slave, as the Stoic or the monk, as the pleasure seeker or the intellectual animal, as each of these types both *was* and *was not* the true self, *was* the self under a limitation, but therefore *was not* the whole self, and so had to give place, in the evolution of life, to a truer *Gestalt*; so too it will prove to be the case with the categories. Each special category will be the truth, but not the whole truth of things. Each, then, will find its truth in later categories. But the last category, which will end the systematic list and which will thus close the series, will express the truth only in so far as it explicitly includes in itself the totality of all the other and previous categories; precisely as the Absolute Life, of which the close of the *Phaenomenologie* gave us a hint, exists only as differentiating itself into the totality of the finite *Gestalten*, as expressing itself in them, and so forgiving their finitude just because the wealth of its own perfection dwells in their totality.

IV

In a way similar to that in which Hegel develops his system of categories, he must undertake also, in accordance with his principles, to deal with

the problem of the nature of the real world, with the relations of the physical world and the mind, and with the origin and with the social and historical connections of those various types of personality which the *Phaenomenologie* merely accepted as empirically given facts of life, and used there merely as illustrations of stages of consciousness. In dealing with the vast range of problems thus suggested, Hegel was obviously sure to meet with the severest test of the adequacy of the philosophical conceptions whose significance we have been sketching in the foregoing. It is one thing to use examples from human life as instances of the dialectical method. It is another thing to show in detail that by means of the sole principle that the nature of the Absolute is most completely expressed in the nature of the self, one can explain the necessity that the life of the Absolute should also be expressed in such an enormous wealth of forms as those which external nature and human history present to our experience. Yet the postulates which determined Hegel's general fashion of thought, and which the foregoing account has now brought to our notice, required him to undertake, although with certain express limitations, a task of this general nature. And his courage was equal to the enterprise, so far as he was able to define to himself what this enterprise meant. It is fair, however, to note at once under what limitations and subject to what restrictions Hegel undertook his task of surveying the sum total of the results of the special sciences known to him, and of unifying these results by means of an application of the dialectical method.

It is indeed unfair to suppose that Hegel regarded as the ideal business of philosophy to deduce *a priori* the necessity according to which the absolute nature of things must require, in consequence of its inevitable dialectic, the existence of each individual thing in nature or even of each law of the physical world, or of each kind of living creature, or of each event of universal history, or of each individual man or nation. People have often attributed to Hegel an extravagant a-priorism of this type, according to which every finite fact should be, in all its individual details, a necessarily required stage in the expression of the Absolute Being. In truth, Hegel was very far removed from such a view. It is true that he asserted that whatever has genuine actuality is an expression of the universal reason, which necessarily expresses itself in a totality of individual infinite forms. But with Hegel, each individual thing has a positive relation to universal reason, and so possesses genuine actuality, not in every respect, but only in so far as it is a *significant* fact. It is part of what he regards as the dialectic process of the Absolute Reason that, just as the one reason expresses itself in forms which are imperfect and finite, so, too, it should express itself in a wealth of forms whose details are accidental as well as imperfect. The Absolute, in order to express itself fully, must, in fact, for the very reasons which the dialectic method

emphasizes, triumph over the unreasonable. And one way in which the unreasonable appears in experience is in the form of the accidental, of the relatively chaotic. Hegel, therefore, is amongst the philosophers who emphasize the presence, in the finite world, of an element of what one may call objective chance. He explicitly insists upon this fact at the outset of his treatment of the philosophy of nature, in the *Encyclopaedie*; and whatever one may think of this doctrine he is profoundly unjust who attributes to Hegel a crass literalism in the application of the famous principle: *Alles Wirkliche ist Vernünftig*. This Hegelian assertion means simply that whatever is the expression of any essential principle, whatever, in other words, is in its detail genuinely necessary, is in the world for some good reason. That is, all true necessity is not blind but significant, is not merely fatal law but is the expression of reason. And wherever there is a good reason for the existence of any object in the world, Hegel's philosophical ideal indeed requires that philosophy shall undertake to tell what that reason is. Nevertheless, Hegel maintains upon characteristically dialectical grounds that, since reason is an active principle, finding its true place in the world as a process of conflict whereby it overcomes its own opponents, there is thus a good general reason why a great deal of what in each particular case is unreason should exist in the world to be overcome. Some of the forms of unreason we have already met with in our discussion of the *Phaenomenologie*. We have seen why Hegel thought it reasonable that such instances of unreason should occur, and should be overcome. There are, then, unreasonable facts in Hegel's world. Such are needed in order to give to Hegel's form of the reasonable principle its opportunity to triumph through its own activity. For we have seen how such triumph is significant. Hence, from Hegel's point of view, it is quite reasonable that particular instances of the irrational should be present, but to be overcome. If you hereupon consider any special instance of an unreasonable fact – a foolish sentiment, a passing mood, a particular superstition, a crime, a mob, a social catastrophe, or any one of the countless varieties of facts in the physical world – Hegel insists that such a fact, just in so far as it expresses no rational principle but is there merely as something for reason to overcome, has an element of brute chance about it, is objectively accidental. Reason requires in general that *such* facts should be found in the world, but not just *this* irrational fact. Hence philosophy has no call to 'deduce' any single fact of this sort; and for Hegel such facts are legion, throughout nature and the social world. Indeed Hegel so differentiates the vocabulary which he uses to name his categories as to enable him to express the sense in which less rational types of facts have their lower and relatively accidental grade of being in his idealistic world. A well-organized social order, for instance, has what he calls *Wirklichkeit*, i.e. genuine actuality. It is, namely, the visible of phenomenal and in so far relatively adequate expression of a

rational principle. But a chance phase of the social order – a panic, a mob, an audience in a theatre – belongs to the world, not of actuality, but of bare existence. Hegel uses for such facts the term *Existenz*; i.e. they are not possessed of *Wirklichkeit*. So too, in the physical world, the solar system has *Wirklichkeit*. But this stone that your feet stumble over in the dark is where it is in what Hegel regards as a relatively accidental way; it is therefore merely an *existent*.

Far then from being, as commonly supposed, an extravagant rationalist, who deduced all natural and social phenomena from a single principle, so, that their detail might be regarded as predictable, Hegel believed, on the contrary, that he had deduced the necessity of the objective presence of an irreducible variety of phenomena which were not further to be viewed as, in their individual detail, rational. Accordingly one may charge Hegel rather with having too hastily overlooked the possibility of discovering a deeper reasonableness in many things which now appear to us to be accidental than with having been a merely blind partisan of the reasonableness of whatever happens.

V

Within the limits thus set, Hegel is, however, committed to the undertaking of bringing all the positive results of the sciences of his time, so far as he personally understood them, into harmony with the fundamental principles of his system. The existence of the physical world, its principal types of inorganic and of organic processes and forms, the relation between the human mind and physical nature, the general characteristics of the human mind itself, its grades and types of mental activity, the relation of the individual to society, the types of social life, the general philosophy of law, the general course of human history, the problems of religion – all the philosophical issues suggested by this catalogue of topics Hegel undertook, in his system, to treat from his own point of view. He stands committed, therefore, to the attempt to show how an Absolute Being, whose inmost nature is expressed in the ways which our study has now brought to our notice, requires the presence in the world of all these various special modes of being.

The principle of the entire system whereby this result is to be obtained is now in outline known to us. The Absolute is essentially a Self – not any one individual human self, but a completely self-determined being, of whom our varied individuality is an expression. The Absolute expresses its life in forms which, if viewed in their most general types, are identical with those categories which we have mentioned. All these expressions of the Absolute are in accordance with the principles of the dialectical method. Finite beings, as the dialectical method shows, have in themselves, in case they are viewed by a false abstraction apart from their source, a self-contradictory nature. The law of finite being is: every finite

thing in heaven and earth, when taken alone, contradicts itself, that is illustrates what Hegel calls the *principle of negativity*. That is, again, no finite being exists in itself, or is in itself intelligible. The infinite then, the Absolute Being, when taken in its true nature, is indeed the only reality. But the infinite, the Absolute Being, that which lies beneath and is embodied in all finite selves, cannot be taken or viewed as *merely* infinite. To view it thus would again be to contradict one's self. For so viewed it would be nothing – like the pure self of the Hindoos. The infinite, then, exists only as differentiated into the totality of its finite expressions. It is what Hegel calls the *concrete* infinite. It can *be* only in so far as it reveals, expresses, embodies, surrenders itself, and so becomes – not indeed exclusively any one finite thing, but the totality of the finite. It is beneath the finite only in so far as it is expressed in and through the finite. It is the totality of the finite viewed in its unity. The forms wherein this infinite reveals itself may still be viewed, however, first abstractly and apart from their concrete expressions. They are the categories, the necessary forms of thought. We can discover these, can develop them by means of the dialectic method; for we ourselves, not in our mere separate individuality, but in our rational consciousness as forms of the self, are identical in nature with the Absolute Being. To discover the categories is at once to define the true nature of the self, and to show how the Absolute Being, which is identical in nature with the basis of all selfhood, can alone express itself. The complete expression of the Absolute, that is the ways in which these categories get a live expression, we find in outer nature with its wealth of forms. Each of these forms in which natural objects appear is in its essence rational; but in its special expression each natural form is finite and so is also accidental. Nature, in fact, is a phenomenal embodiment of the categories – an embodiment which exists just because the Absolute, in order to be true to its own dialectical nature, must first express itself in what appears to be an external and foreign form, even in order to win, through the conquest over this form, a consciousness of its own complete self-possession. But again, the Absolute, if viewed as conquering its natural or apparently foreign form of expression, in order thereby to win a conscious self-possession, constitutes, in contrast with external nature, the world of finite minds. A finite mind is a process whereby the Absolute expresses itself as some special instance of a conflict with nature, with chance, with the accidental. Through this conflict, through vicissitudes such as the *Gestalten* of the *Phaenomenologie* have already exemplified, the Absolute wins a consciousness of its conquest over its own self-alienation. For, as Hegel repeatedly insists, the only way in which self-consciousness can attain its goal is through such a conquest over self-alienation, through a becoming finite, through suffering as a finite being, through encountering estrangement, accident, the unreasonable, the defective, and through

winning hereby a self-possession that belongs only to the life that first seeks in order to find. Assuming a natural guise, being subject to finite conditions, the Absolute wins in human form its self-possession at the moment when it comes to regard this human life as an embodiment of an absolute, that is of a divine life.

VI

The consciousness that our natural and finite life is the mode of expression which is necessary for the very existence of an Absolute or Infinite Life takes, according to Hegel, three shapes – those of art, of religion and of philosophy. Art presents the union of the finite with the infinite by displaying a phenomenal object which directly appears as expressing an absolute ideal. Religion knows the fact of this union of the finite and the infinite in a still higher form, but expresses this knowledge in allegorical, in imaginative forms. Philosophy, with the fullest consciousness of the necessary truth of the process, deduces and realizes the necessity of the existence of an Absolute Being, and the further necessity that this being should be expressed in the form, first of an active process, and then of a process which takes shape in the rational lives of conscious beings.

Art appeals to direct perception, and so involves no proof of the revelation which it actually gives of the union of finite and infinite. The proof which religion gives for its view of the unity of God and man, of absolute and of finite, takes the form of the faith of an organized body – in ancient civilization, the faith of an organized nation, in modern civilization, the faith of a church. There are lower and higher forms of religion. But in any case, religion normally expresses itself in the conscious relation of a socially organized body of believers to that divine life which expresses itself to them and in them. In the religious consciousness, the Absolute Being becomes, in fact, aware of itself in and through finite conscious beings. This religious self-consciousness of the Absolute reaches its highest form in the Christian consciousness, which Hegel believed himself to be expressing with substantial accuracy.

On the other hand, the self-consciousness of the Absolute reaches its remaining and most explicit form in philosophy, where the proof of the propositions involved consists, as we have now seen, of three essential parts:

1. The general idealistic proof that thought and being, as Hegel loves to say, are identical. This means that a being whose nature is other than that which the internal necessity of a rational thinking process requires and defines is impossible.
2. The explicit deduction of the categories which express the nature of thought, and so the ultimate nature of reality.
3. That application of the dialectical method already so largely illustrated by our study of the *Phaenomenologie*. This application proves,

according to Hegel, that truth can only be expressed as a synthesis of various views which, if taken in their abstraction, are self-contradictory, while their synthesis itself is harmonious. Viewed otherwise, the same method makes clear that no finite being and no finite truth can exist or be defined in itself, and apart from the totality of truth; while, on the other hand, the infinite being, the Absolute, which is simply this totality of dialectically organized truth, can exist only as expressed in finite form.

Whenever these propositions are brought clearly and in their true synthesis into consciousness, then and there the Absolute Being, which is precisely what the self at once aims to be, and in principle is, becomes conscious of itself. The individual man who thinks becomes aware, not that his natural individuality is of any importance, in its accidental character, as a means of determining truth, but that in him the Absolute Being has become and is conscious of itself.

The philosophical and the religious consciousness, phenomenally, exist as events in time. They are expressions, however, of a process which must be viewed not as temporal but as eternal. In human philosophy and in human religion, the Absolute temporally appears as being at a certain moment what he in fact timelessly is, conscious of himself. For in the Absolute all the dialectical stages which time separates are eternally present together.

Extract from *A Pluralistic Universe* (1909)

William James

Hegel and his method

Directly or indirectly, that strange and powerful genius Hegel has done more to strengthen idealistic pantheism in thoughtful circles than all other influences put together. I must talk a little about him before drawing my final conclusions about the cogency of the arguments for the absolute. In no philosopher is the fact that a philosopher's vision and the technique he uses in proof of it are two different things more palpably evident than in Hegel. The vision in his case was that of a world in which reason holds all things in solution and accounts for all the irrationality that superficially appears by taking it up as a 'moment' into itself. This vision was so intense in Hegel, and the tone of authority with which he spoke from out of the midst of it was so weighty, that the impression he made has never been effaced. Once dilated to the scale of the master's eye, the disciples' sight could not contract to any lesser prospect. The technique which Hegel used to prove his vision was the so-called dialectic method, but here his fortune has been quite contrary. Hardly a recent disciple has felt his particular applications of the method to be satisfactory. Many have let them drop entirely, treating them rather as a sort of provisional stop-gap, symbolic of what might some day prove possible of execution, but having no literal cogency or value now. Yet these very same disciples hold to the vision itself as a revelation that can never pass away. The case is curious and worthy of our study.

It is still more curious in that these same disciples, although they are usually willing to abandon any particular instance of the dialectic method to its critics, are unshakeably sure that in some shape the dialectic method is the key to truth. What, then, is the dialectic method? It is itself a part of the Hegelian vision or intuition, and a part that finds the strongest echo in empiricism and common sense. Great injustice is done to Hegel

by treating him as primarily a reasoner. He is in reality a naively observant man, only beset with a perverse preference for the use of technical and logical jargon. He plants himself in the empirical flux of things and gets the impression of what happens. His mind is in very truth *impressionistic*; and his thought, when once you put yourself at the animating centre of it, is the easiest thing in the world to catch the pulse of and to follow.

Any author is easy if you can catch the centre of his vision. From the centre in Hegel come those towering sentences of his that are comparable only to Luther's, as where, speaking of the ontological proof of God's existence from the concept of him as the *ens perfectissimum* to which no attribute can be lacking, he says:

It would be strange if the Notion, the very heart of the mind, or, in a word, the concrete totality we call God, were not rich enough to embrace so poor a category as Being, the very poorest and most abstract of all – for nothing can be more insignificant than Being.

But if Hegel's central thought is easy to catch, his abominable habits of speech make his application of it to details exceedingly difficult to follow. His passion for the slipshod in the way of sentences, his unprincipled playing fast and loose with terms; his dreadful vocabulary, calling what completes a thing its 'negation', for example; his systematic refusal to let you know whether he is talking logic or physics or psychology, his whole deliberately adopted policy of ambiguity and vagueness, in short: all these things make his present-day readers wish to tear their hair – or his – out in desperation. Like Byron's corsair, he has left a name 'to other times, link'd with one virtue and a thousand crimes'.

The virtue was the vision, which was really in two parts. The first part was that reason is all-inclusive; the second was that things are 'dialectic'. Let me say a word about this second part of Hegel's vision.

The impression that any naive person gets who plants himself innocently in the flux of things is that things are off their balance. Whatever equilibriums our finite experiences attain to are but provisional. Martinique volcanoes shatter our Wordsworthian equilibrium with nature. Accidents, either moral, mental or physical, break up the slowly built-up equilibriums men reach in family life and in their civic and professional relations. Intellectual enigmas frustrate our scientific systems, and the ultimate cruelty of the universe upsets our religious attitudes and outlooks. Of no special system of good attained does the universe recognize the value as sacred. Down it tumbles, over it goes, to feed the ravenous appetite for destruction of the larger system of history in which it stood for a moment as a landing-place and stepping-stone. This dogging of everything by its negative, its fate, its undoing, this perpetual moving on

to something future which shall supersede the present, this is the Hegelian intuition of the essential provisionality, and consequent unreality, of everything empirical and finite. Take any concrete finite thing and try to hold it fast. You cannot, for so held, it proves not to be concrete at all, but an arbitrary extract or abstract which you have made from the remainder of empirical reality. The rest of things invades and overflows both it and you together, and defeats your rash attempt. Any partial view whatever of the world tears the part out of its relations, leaves out some truth concerning it, is untrue of it, falsifies it. The full truth about anything involves more than that thing. In the end nothing less than the whole of everything can be the truth of anything at all.

Taken so far, and taken in the rough, Hegel is not only harmless, but accurate. There *is* a dialectic movement in things, if such it please you to call it, one that the whole constitution of concrete life establishes; but it is one that can be described and accounted for in terms of the pluralistic vision of things far more naturally than in the monistic terms to which Hegel finally reduced it. Pluralistic empiricism knows that everything is in an environment, a surrounding world of other things, and that if you leave it to work there it will inevitably meet with friction and opposition from its neighbours. Its rivals and enemies will destroy it unless it can buy them off by compromising some part of its original pretensions.

But Hegel saw this undeniable characteristic of the world we live in in a non-empirical light. Let the *mental idea* of the thing work in your thought all alone, he fancied, and just the same consequences will follow. It will be negated by the opposite ideas that dog it, and can survive only by entering, along with them, into some kind of treaty. This treaty will be an instance of the so-called 'higher synthesis' of everything with its negative; and Hegel's originality lay in transporting the process from the sphere of percepts to that of concepts and treating it as the universal method by which every kind of life, logical, physical or psychological, is mediated. Not to the sensible facts as such, then, did Hegel point for the secret of what keeps existence going, but rather to the conceptual way of treating them. Concepts were not in his eyes the static self-contained things that previous logicians had supposed, but were germinative, and passed beyond themselves into each other by what he called their immanent dialectic. In ignoring each other as they do, they virtually exclude and deny each other, he thought, and thus in a manner introduce each other. So the dialectic logic, according to him, had to supersede the 'logic of identity' in which, since Aristotle, all Europe had been brought up.

This view of concepts is Hegel's revolutionary performance; but so studiously vague and ambiguous are all his expressions of it that one can hardly tell whether it is the concepts as such, or the sensible experiences and elements conceived, that Hegel really means to work with. The only thing that is certain is that whatever you may say of his procedure,

someone will accuse you of misunderstanding it. I make no claim to understanding it: I treat it merely impressionistically.

So treating it, I regret that he should have called it by the name of logic. Clinging as he did to the vision of a really living world, and refusing to be content with a chopped-up intellectualist picture of it, it is a pity that he should have adopted the very word that intellectualism had already pre-empted. But he clung fast to the old rationalist contempt for the immediately given world of sense and all its squalid particulars, and never tolerated the notion that the form of philosophy might be empirical only. His own system had to be a product of eternal reason, so the word 'logic', with its suggestions of coercive necessity, was the only word he could find natural. He pretended therefore to be using the *a priori* method, and to be working by a scanty equipment of ancient logical terms – position, negation, reflection, universal, particular, individual, and the like. But what he really worked by was his own empirical perceptions, which exceeded and overflowed his miserably insufficient logical categories in every instance of their use.

What he did with the category of negation was his most original stroke. The orthodox opinion is that you can advance logically through the field of concepts only by going from the same to the same. Hegel felt deeply the sterility of this law of conceptual thought; he saw that in a fashion negation also relates things; and he had the brilliant idea of transcending the ordinary logic by treating advance from the different to the different as if it were also a necessity of thought. The so-called maxim of identity, he wrote, is supposed to be accepted by the consciousness of everyone. But the language which such a law demands, 'a planet is a planet; Magnetism is magnetism; Mind is mind', deserves to be called silliness. No mind either speaks or thinks or forms conceptions in accordance with this law, and no existence of any kind whatever conforms to it. We must never view identity as abstract identity, to the exclusion of all difference. That is the touchstone for distinguishing all bad philosophy from what alone deserves the name of philosophy. If thinking were no more than registering abstract identities, it would be a most superfluous performance. Things and concepts are identical with themselves only in so far as at the same time they involve distinction.¹

The distinction that Hegel has in mind here is naturally in the first instance distinction from all other things or concepts. But in his hands this quickly develops into contradiction of them, and finally, reflected back upon itself, into self-contradiction; and the immanent self-contradictoriness of all finite concepts thenceforth becomes the propulsive logical force that moves the world.² 'Isolate a thing from all its relations', says Dr Edward Caird,³ expounding Hegel, 'and try to assert it by itself; you find that it has negated itself as well as its relations. The thing in itself is nothing.' Or, to quote Hegel's own words: 'When we suppose an

existent A, and another, B, B is at first defined as the other. But A is just as much the other of B. Both are others in the same fashion. . . . "Other" is the other by itself, therefore the other of every other, consequently the other of itself, the simply unlike itself, the self-negator, the self-alterer' etc.⁴ Hegel writes elsewhere: 'The finite, as implicitly other than what it is, is forced to surrender its own immediate or natural being, and to turn suddenly into its opposite. . . . Dialectic is the universal and irresistible power, before which nothing can stay. . . . *Summum jus, summa injuria* – to drive an abstract right to excess is to commit injustice. . . . Extreme anarchy and extreme despotism lead to one another. Pride comes before a fall: Too much wit out-wits itself. Joy brings tears, melancholy a sardonic smile.'⁵ To which one might well add that most human institutions, by the purely technical and professional manner in which they come to be administered, end by becoming obstacles to the very purposes which their founders had in view.

Once catch well the knack of this scheme of thought and you are lucky if you ever get away from it. It is all you can see. Let anyone pronounce anything, and your feeling of a contradiction being implied becomes a habit, almost a motor habit in some persons who symbolize by a stereotyped gesture the position, sublation and final reinstatement involved. If you say 'two' or 'many', your speech bewrayeth you, for the very name collects them into one. If you express doubt, your expression contradicts its content, for the doubt itself is not doubted but affirmed. If you say 'disorder', what is that but a certain bad kind of order? If you say 'indetermination', you are determining just *that*. If you say 'nothing but the unexpected happens', the unexpected becomes what you expect. If you say 'all things are relative', to what is the all of them itself relative? If you say 'no more', you have said more already, by implying a region in which no more is found; to know a limit as such is consequently already to have got beyond it; and so forth, throughout as many examples as one cares to cite.

Whatever you posit appears thus as one-sided, and negates its other, which, being equally one-sided, negates *it*; and, since this situation remains unstable, the two contradictory terms have together, according to Hegel, to engender a higher truth of which they both appear as indispensable members, mutually mediating aspects of that higher concept or situation in thought.

Every higher total, however provisional and relative, thus reconciles the contradictions which its parts, abstracted from it, prove implicitly to contain. Rationalism, you remember, is what I called the way of thinking that methodically subordinates parts to wholes, so Hegel here is rationalistic through-and-through. The only whole by which *all* contradictions are reconciled is for him the absolute whole of wholes, the all-inclusive reason to which Hegel himself gave the name of the absolute Idea, but which I

shall continue to call 'the absolute' purely and simply, as I have done hitherto.

Empirical instances of the way in which higher unities reconcile contradictions are innumerable, so here again Hegel's vision, taken merely impressionistically, agrees with countless facts. Somehow life does, out of its total resources, find ways of satisfying opposites at once. This is precisely the paradoxical aspect which much of our civilization presents. Peace we secure by armaments, liberty by laws and constitutions; simplicity and naturalness are the consummate result of artificial breeding and training; health, strength and wealth are increased only by lavish use, expense and wear. Our mistrust of mistrust engenders our commercial system of credit; our tolerance of anarchistic and revolutionary utterances is the only way of lessening their danger; our charity has to say no to beggars in order not to defeat its own desires; the true epicurean has to observe great sobriety; the way to certainty lies through radical doubt; virtue signifies not innocence but the knowledge of sin and its overcoming; by obeying nature, we command her, etc. The ethical and the religious life are full of such contradictions held in solution. You hate your enemy? Well, forgive him, and thereby heap coals of fire on his head; to realize yourself, renounce yourself; to save your soul, first lose it; in short, die to live.

From such massive examples one easily generalizes Hegel's vision. Roughly, his 'dialectic' picture is a fair account of a good deal of the world. It sounds paradoxical, but whenever you once place yourself at the point of view of any higher synthesis, you see exactly how it does in a fashion take up opposites into itself. As an example, consider the conflict between our carnivorous appetites and hunting instincts and the sympathy with animals which our refinement is bringing in its train. We have found how to reconcile these opposites most effectively by establishing gamelaws and close seasons and by keeping domestic herds. The creatures preserved thus are preserved for the sake of slaughter, truly, but if not preserved for that reason, not one of them would be alive at all. Their will to live and our will to kill them thus harmoniously combine in this peculiar higher synthesis of domestication.

Merely as a reporter of certain empirical aspects of the actual, Hegel, then, is great and true. But he aimed at being something far greater than an empirical reporter, so I must say something about that essential aspect of his thought. Hegel was dominated by the notion of a truth that should prove incontrovertible, binding on everyone, and certain, which should be *the* truth, one, indivisible, eternal, objective and necessary, to which all our particular thinking must lead as to its consummation. This is the dogmatic ideal, the postulate, uncriticized, undoubted and unchallenged, of all rationalizers in philosophy. '*I have never doubted*', a recent Oxford writers says, that truth is universal and single and timeless, a single

content or significance, one and whole and complete.⁶ Advance in thinking, in the Hegelian universe, has, in short, to proceed by the apodictic words 'must be' rather than by those inferior hypothetic words 'may be', which are all that empiricists can use.

Now Hegel found that his idea of an immanent movement through the field of concepts by way of 'dialectic' negation played most beautifully into the hands of this rationalistic demand for something absolute and *inconcussum* in the way of truth. It is easy to see how. If you affirm anything, for example that A is, and simply leave the matter thus, you leave it at the mercy of anyone who may supervene and says 'not A, but B is'. If he does say so, your statement doesn't refute him; it simply contradicts him, just as his contradicts you. The only way of making your affirmation about A *self-securing* is by getting it into a form which will by implication negate all possible negations in advance. The mere absence of negation is not enough; it must be present, but present with its fangs drawn: your A must not only be an A, it must be a non-not-A as well; it must already have cancelled all the Bs or made them innocuous, by having negated them in advance. Double negation is the only form of affirmation that fully plays into the hands of the dogmatic ideal. Simply and innocently affirmative statements are good enough for empiricists, but unfit for rationalist use, lying open as they do to every accidental contradictor, and exposed to every puff of doubt. The *final* truth must be something to which there is no imaginable alternative, because it contains all its possible alternatives inside of itself as moments already taken account of and overcome. Whatever involves its own alternatives as elements of itself is, in a phrase often repeated, its 'own other', made so by the *Methode der absoluten Negativität*.

Formally, this scheme of an organism of truth that has already fed as it were on its own liability to death, so that, death once dead for it, there's no more dying then, is the very fulfilment of the rationalistic aspiration. That one and only whole, with all its parts involved in it, negating and making one another impossible if abstracted and taken singly, but necessitating and holding one another in place if the whole of them be taken integrally, is the literal ideal sought after; it is the very diagram and picture of that notion of *the* truth with no outlying alternative, to which nothing can be added, or from it anything withdrawn, and all variations from which are absurd, which so dominates the human imagination. Once we have taken in the features of this diagram that so successfully solves the world-old problem, the older ways of proving the necessity of judgments cease to give us satisfaction. Hegel's way we think must be the right way. The true must be essentially the self-reflecting self-contained recurrent, that which secures itself by including its own other and negating it; that makes a spherical system with no loose ends hanging out for foreignness to get a hold upon; that is for ever rounded-in and

closed, not strung along rectilinearly and open at its ends like that universe of simply collective or additive form which Hegel calls the world of the bad infinite, and which is all that empiricism, starting with simply posited single parts and elements, is ever able to attain to.

No one can possibly deny the sublimity of this Hegelian conception. It is surely in the grand style, if there be such a thing as a grand style in philosophy. For us, however, it remains, so far, a merely formal and diagrammatic conception; for with the actual content of absolute truth, as Hegel materially tries to set it forth, few disciples have been satisfied, and I do not propose to refer at all to the concreter parts of his philosophy. The main thing now is to grasp the generalized vision, and feel the attractiveness of the abstract scheme of a statement self-secured by involving double negation. Absolutists who make no use of Hegel's own technique are really working by his method. You remember the proofs of the absolute which I instanced in my last lecture, Lotze's and Royce's proofs by *reductio ad absurdum*, to the effect that any smallest connection rashly supposed in things will logically work out into absolute union, and any minimal disconnection into absolute disunion – these are really arguments framed on the Hegelian pattern. The truth is that which you implicitly affirm in the very attempt to deny it; it is that from which every variation refutes itself by proving self-contradictory. This is the supreme insight of rationalism, and today the best *must-be's* of rationalist argumentation are but so many attempts to communicate it to the hearer.

Thus, you see, my last lecture and this lecture make connection again and we can consider Hegel and the other absolutists to be supporting the same system. The next point I wish to dwell on is the part played by what I have called vicious intellectualism in this wonderful system's structure.

Rationalism in general thinks it gets the fullness of truth by turning away from sensation to conception, conception obviously giving the more universal and immutable picture. Intellectualism in the vicious sense I have already defined as the habit of assuming that a concept *excludes* from any reality conceived by its means everything not included in the concept's definition. I called such intellectualism illegitimate as I found it used in Lotze's, Royce's and Bradley's proofs of the absolute (which absolute I consequently held to be not-proven by their arguments), and I left off by asserting my own belief that a pluralistic and incompletely integrated universe, describable only by the free use of the word 'some', is a legitimate hypothesis.

Now Hegel himself, in building up his method of double negation, offers the vividest possible example of this vicious intellectualism. Every idea of a finite thing is of course a concept of *that* thing and not a concept of anything else. But Hegel treats this not being a concept of anything else as if it were *equivalent to the concept of anything else not being*, or

in other words as if it were a denial or negation of everything else. Then, as the other things, thus implicitly contradicted by the thing first conceived, also by the same law contradict *it*, the pulse of dialectic commences to beat and the famous triads begin to grind out the cosmos. If anyone finds the process here to be a luminous one, he must be left to the illumination; he must remain an undisturbed Hegelian. What others feel as the intolerable ambiguity, verbosity and unscrupulousness of the master's way of deducing things he will probably ascribe – since divine oracles are notoriously hard to interpret – to the 'difficulty' that habitually accompanies profundity. For my own part, there seems something grotesque and *saugrenu* in the pretension of a style so disobedient to the first rules of sound communication between minds to be the authentic mother-tongue of reason, and to keep step more accurately than any other style does with the absolute's own ways of thinking. I do not therefore take Hegel's technical apparatus seriously at all. I regard him rather as one of those numerous original seers who can never learn how to articulate. His would-be coercive logic counts for nothing in my eyes; but that does not in the least impugn the philosophic importance of his conception of the absolute, if we take it merely hypothetically as one of the great types of cosmic vision.

Taken thus hypothetically, I wish to discuss it briefly. But before doing so I must call your attention to an odd peculiarity in the Hegelian procedure. The peculiarity is one which will come before us again for a final judgment in my seventh lecture, so at present I only note it in passing. Hegel, you remember, considers that the immediate finite data of experience are 'untrue' because they are not their own others. They are negated by what is external to them. The absolute is true because it and it only has no external environment, and has attained to being its own other. (These words sound queer enough, but those of you who know something of Hegel's text will follow them.) Granting his premise that to be true a thing must in some sort be its own other, everything hinges on whether he is right in holding that the several pieces of finite experience themselves cannot be said to be in any wise *their* own others. When conceptually or intellectualistically treated, they of course cannot be their own others. Every abstract concept as such excludes what it doesn't include; and if such concepts are adequate substitutes for reality's concrete pulses, the latter must square themselves with intellectualistic logic, and no one of them in any sense can claim to be its own other. If, however, the conceptual treatment of the flow of reality should prove for any good reason to be inadequate and to have a practical rather than a theoretical or speculative value, then an independent empirical look into the constitution of reality's pulses might possibly show that some of them *are* their own others, and indeed are so in the self-same sense in which the absolute is maintained to be so by Hegel. When we come to

my sixth lecture, on Professor Bergson, I shall in effect defend this very view, strengthening my thesis by his authority. I am unwilling to say anything more about the point at this time, and what I have just said of it is only a sort of surveyor's note of where our present position lies in the general framework of these lectures.

Let us turn now at last to the great question of fact, *does the absolute exist or not?*, to which all our previous discussion has been preliminary. I may sum up that discussion by saying that whether there really be an absolute or not, no one makes himself absurd or self-contradictory by doubting or denying it. The charges of self-contradiction, where they do not rest on purely verbal reasoning, rest on a vicious intellectualism. I will not recapitulate my criticisms. I will simply ask you to change the *venue*, and to discuss the absolute now as if it were only an open hypothesis. As such, is it more probable or more improbable?

But first of all I must parenthetically ask you to distinguish the notion of the absolute carefully from that of another object with which it is liable to become heedlessly entangled. That other object is the 'God' of common people in their religion, and the creator-God of orthodox Christian theology. Only thoroughgoing monists or pantheists believe in the absolute. The God of our popular Christianity is but one member of a pluralistic system. He and we stand outside of each other, just as the devil, the saints and the angels stand outside of both of us. I can hardly conceive of anything more different from the absolute than the God, say, of David or of Isaiah. *That* God is an essentially finite being *in* the cosmos, not with the cosmos in him, and indeed he has a very local habitation there, and very one-sided local and personal attachments. If it should prove probable that the absolute does not exist, it will not follow in the slightest degree that a God like that of David, Isaiah or Jesus may not exist, or may not be the most important existence in the universe for us to acknowledge. I pray you, then, not to confound the two ideas as you listen to the criticisms I shall have to proffer. I hold to the finite God, for reasons which I shall touch on in the seventh of these lectures; but I hold that his rival and competitor – I feel almost tempted to say his enemy – the absolute, is not only not forced on us by logic, but that it is an improbable hypothesis.

The great claim made for the absolute is that by supposing it we make the world appear more rational. Any hypothesis that does that will always be accepted as more probably true than an hypothesis that makes the world appear irrational. Men are once for all so made that they prefer a rational world to believe in and to live in. But rationality has at least four dimensions, intellectual, aesthetical, moral and practical; and to find a world rational to the maximal degree *in all these respects simultaneously* is no easy matter. Intellectually, the world of mechanical materialism is the most rational, for we subject its events to mathematical calculation.

But the mechanical world is ugly, as arithmetic is ugly, and it is non-moral. Morally, the theistic world is rational enough, but full of intellectual frustrations. The practical world of affairs, in its turn, so supremely rational to the politician, the military man or the man of conquering business-faculty that he never would vote to change the type of it, is irrational to moral and artistic temperaments; so that whatever demand for rationality we find satisfied by a philosophic hypothesis, we are liable to find some other demand for rationality unsatisfied by the same hypothesis. The rationality we gain in one coin we thus pay for in another; and the problem accordingly seems at first sight to resolve itself into that of getting a conception which will yield the largest *balance* of rationality rather than one which will yield perfect rationality of every description. In general, it may be said that if a man's conception of the world lets loose any action in him that is easy, or any faculty which he is fond of exercising, he will deem it rational in so far forth, be the faculty that of computing, fighting, lecturing, classifying, framing schematic tabulations, getting the better end of a bargain, patiently waiting and enduring, preaching, joke-making, or what you like. Albeit the absolute is defined as being necessarily an embodiment of objectively perfect rationality, it is fair to its English advocates to say that those who have espoused the hypothesis most concretely and seriously have usually avowed the irrationality to their own minds of certain elements in it.

Probably the weightiest contribution to our feeling of the rationality of the universe which the notion of the absolute brings is the assurance that however disturbed the surface may be, at bottom all is well with the cosmos – central peace abiding at the heart of endless agitation. This conception is rational in many ways, beautiful aesthetically, beautiful intellectually (could we only follow it into detail) and beautiful morally, if the enjoyment of security can be accounted moral. Practically it is less beautiful; for, as we saw in our last lecture, in representing the deepest reality of the world as static and without a history, it loosens the world's hold upon our sympathies and leaves the soul of it foreign. Nevertheless it does give *peace*, and that kind of rationality is so paramously demanded by men that to the end of time there will be absolutists, men who choose belief in a static eternal, rather than admit that the finite world of change and striving, even with a God as one of the strivers, is itself eternal. For such minds Professor Royce's words will always be the truest:

The very presence of ill in the temporal order is the condition of the perfection of the eternal order. . . . We long for the Absolute only in so far as in us the Absolute also longs, and seeks, through our very temporal striving, the peace that is nowhere in Time, but only, and yet absolutely, in Eternity. Were there then no longing in Time, there

would be no peace in Eternity. . . . God [i.e. the absolute] who here, in me, aims at what I now temporally miss, not only possesses, in the eternal world, the goal after which I strive, but comes to possess it even through and because of my sorrow. Through this my tribulation the Absolute triumph, then, is won. . . . In the Absolute I am fulfilled. Yet my very fulfilment demands, and therefore can transcend, this very sorrow.⁷

Royce is particularly felicitous in his ability to cite parts of finite experience to which he finds his picture of this absolute experience analogous. But it is hard to portray the absolute at all without rising into what might be called the 'inspired' style of language – I use the word not ironically, but prosaically and descriptively, to designate the only literary form that goes with the kind of emotion that the absolute arouses. One can follow the pathway of reasoning soberly enough,⁸ but the picture itself has to be effulgent. This admirable faculty of transcending, whilst inwardly preserving, every contrariety is the absolute's characteristic form of rationality. We are but syllables in the mouth of the Lord; if the whole sentence is divine, each syllable is absolutely what it should be, in spite of all appearances. In making up the balance for or against absolutism, this emotional value weights heavily the credit side of the account.

The trouble is that we are able to see so little into the positive detail of it, and that if once admitted not to be coercively proven by the intellectualist arguments, it remains only a hypothetical possibility.

On the debit side of the account the absolute, taken seriously, and not as a mere name for our right occasionally to drop the strenuous mood and take a moral holiday, introduces all those tremendous irrationalities into the universe which a frankly pluralistic theism escapes, but which have been flung as a reproach at every form of monistic theism or pantheism. It introduces a speculative 'problem of evil', namely, and leaves us wondering why the perfection of the absolute should require just such particular hideous forms of life as darken the day for our human imaginations. If they were forced on it by something alien, and to 'overcome' them the absolute had still to keep hold of them, we could understand its feeling of triumph, though we, so far as we were ourselves among the elements overcome, could acquiesce but sullenly in the resultant situation, and would never just have chosen it as the most rational one conceivable. But the absolute is represented as a being without environment, upon which nothing alien can be forced, and which has spontaneously chosen from within to give itself the spectacle of all that evil rather than a spectacle with less evil in it.⁹ Its perfection is represented as the source of things, and yet the first effect of that perfection is the tremendous imperfection of all finite experience. In whatever sense the word 'rationality' may be taken, it is vain to contend that the

impression made on our finite minds by such a way of representing things is altogether rational. Theologians have felt its irrationality acutely, and the 'fall', the predestination and the election which the situation involves have given them more trouble than anything else in their attempt to pantheize Christianity. The whole business remains a puzzle, both intellectually and morally.

Grant that the spectacle or world-romance offered to itself by the absolute is in the absolute's eyes perfect. Why would not the world be more perfect by having the affair remain in just those terms, and by not having any finite spectators to come in and add to what was perfect already their innumerable imperfect manners of seeing the same spectacle? Suppose the entire universe to consist of one superb copy of a book, fit for the ideal reader. Is that universe improved or deteriorated by having myriads of garbled and misprinted separate leaves and chapters also published, giving false impressions of the book to whoever looks at them? To say the least, the balance of rationality is not obviously in favour of such added mutilations. So this question becomes urgent: why, the absolute's own total vision of things being so rational, was it necessary to comminute it into all these coexisting inferior fragmentary visions?

Leibnitz in his theodicy represents God as limited by an antecedent reason in things which makes certain combinations logically incompatible, certain goods impossible. He surveys in advance all the universes he might create, and by an act of what Leibnitz calls his antecedent will he chooses our actual world as the one in which the evil, unhappily necessary anyhow, is at its minimum. It is the best of all the worlds that are possible, therefore, but by no means the most abstractly desirable world. Having made this mental choice, God next proceeds to what Leibnitz calls his act of consequent or decretory will: he says 'Fiat', and the world selected springs into objective being, with all the finite creatures in it to suffer from its imperfections without sharing in its creator's atoning vision.

Lotze has made some penetrating remarks on this conception of Leibnitz's, and they exactly fall in with what I say of the absolutist conception. The world projected out of the creative mind by the *fiat*, and existing in detachment from its author, is a sphere of being where the parts realize themselves only singly. If the divine value of them is evident only when they are collectively looked at, then, Lotze rightly says, the world surely becomes poorer and not richer for God's utterance of the *fiat*. He might much better have remained contented with his merely antecedent choice of the scheme, without following it up by a creative decree. The scheme *as such* was admirable; it could only lose by being translated into reality.¹⁰ Why, I similarly ask, should the absolute ever have lapsed from the perfection of its own integral experience of things, and refracted itself into all our finite experiences?

It is but fair to recent English absolutists to say that many of them

have confessed the imperfect rationality of the absolute from this point of view. Mr McTaggart, for example, writes:

Does not our very failure to perceive the perfection of the universe destroy it? . . . In so far as we do not see the perfection of the universe, we are not perfect ourselves. And as we are part of the universe, that too cannot be perfect.¹¹

And Mr Joachim finds just the same difficulty. Calling the hypothesis of the absolute by the name of the 'coherence-theory of truth', he calls the problem of understanding how the complete coherence of all things in the absolute should involve as a necessary moment in its self-maintenance the self-assertion of the finite minds, a self-assertion which in its extreme form is error – he calls this problem, I say, an insoluble puzzle. If truth be the universal *fons et origo*, how does error slip in? 'The coherence-theory of truth', he concludes, 'may thus be said to suffer shipwreck at the very entrance of the harbour.'¹² Yet in spite of this rather bad form of irrationality, Mr Joachim stoutly asserts his 'immediate certainty'¹³ of the theory shipwrecked, the correctness of which he says he has 'never doubted'. This candid confession of a fixed attitude of faith in the absolute, which even one's own criticisms and perplexities fail to disturb, seems to me very significant. Not only empiricists, but absolutists also, would all, if they were as candid as this author, confess that the prime thing in their philosophy is their vision of a truth possible, which they then employ their reasoning to convert, as best it can, into a certainty or probability.

I can imagine a believer in the absolute retorting at this point that *he* at any rate is not dealing with mere probabilities, but that the nature of things logically requires the multitudinous erroneous copies, and that therefore the universe cannot be the absolute's book alone. For, he will ask, is not the absolute defined as the total consciousness of everything that is? Must not its field of view consist of parts? And what can the parts of a total consciousness be unless they be fractional consciousnesses? Our finite minds *must* therefore coexist with the absolute mind. We are its constituents, and it cannot live without us. But if any one of you feels tempted to retort in this wise, let me remind you that you are frankly employing pluralistic weapons, and thereby giving up the absolutist cause. The notion that the absolute is made of constituents on which its being depends is the rankest empiricism. The absolute as such has *objects*, not constituents, and if the objects develop selfhoods upon their own several accounts, those selfhoods must be set down as facts additional to the absolute consciousness, and not as elements implicated in its definition. The absolute is a rationalist conception. Rationalism goes from wholes to parts, and always assumes wholes to be self-sufficing.¹⁴

My conclusion, so far, then, is this, that although the hypothesis of the absolute, in yielding a certain kind of religious peace, performs a most important rationalizing function, it nevertheless, from the intellectual point of view, remains decidedly irrational. The *ideally* perfect whole is certainly that whole of which the *parts also are perfect* – if we can depend on logic for anything, we can depend on it for that definition. The absolute is defined as the ideally perfect whole, yet most of its parts, if not all, are admittedly imperfect. Evidently the conception lacks internal consistency, and yields us a problem rather than a solution. It creates a speculative puzzle, the so-called mystery of evil and of error, from which a pluralistic metaphysic is entirely free.

In any pluralistic metaphysic, the problems that evil presents are practical, not speculative. Not why evil should exist at all, but how we can lessen the actual amount of it, is the sole question we need there consider. 'God', in the religious life of ordinary men, is the name not of the whole of things, heaven forbid, but only of the ideal tendency in things, believed in as a superhuman person who calls us to cooperate in his purposes, and who furthers ours if they are worthy. He works in an external environment, has limits, and has enemies. When John Mill said that the notion of God's omnipotence must be given up, if God is to be kept as a religious object, he was surely accurately right; yet so prevalent is the lazy monism that idly haunts the region of God's name that so simple and truthful a saying was generally treated as a paradox: God, it was said, *could* not be finite. I believe that the only God worthy of the name *must* be finite, and I shall return to this point in a later lecture. If the absolute exist in addition – and the hypothesis must, in spite of its irrational features, still be left open – then the absolute is only the wider cosmic whole of which our God is but the most ideal portion, and which in the more usual human sense is hardly to be termed a religious hypothesis at all. 'Cosmic emotion' is the better name for the reaction it may awaken.

Observe that all the irrationalities and puzzles which the absolute gives rise to, and from which the finite God remains free, are due to the fact that the absolute has nothing, absolutely nothing, outside of itself. The finite God whom I contrast with it may conceivably have *almost* nothing outside of himself; he may already have triumphed over and absorbed all but the minutest fraction of the universe; but that fraction, however small, reduces him to the status of a relative being, and in principle the universe is saved from all the irrationalities incidental to absolutism. The only irrationality left would be the irrationality of which pluralism as such is accused, and of this I hope to say a word more later.

I have tired you with so many subtleties in this lecture that I will add only two other counts to my indictment.

First, then, let me remind you that *the absolute is useless for deductive purposes*. It gives us absolute safety if you will, but it is compatible with every relative danger. You cannot enter the phenomenal world with the notion of it in your grasp, and name beforehand any detail which you are likely to meet there. Whatever the details of experience may prove to be, *after the fact of them* the absolute will adopt them. It is an hypothesis that functions retrospectively only, not prospectively. *That*, whatever it may be, will have been in point of fact the sort of world which the absolute was pleased to offer to itself as a spectacle.

Again, the absolute is always represented idealistically, as the all-knower. Thinking this view consistently out leads one to frame an almost ridiculous conception of the absolute mind, owing to the enormous mass of unprofitable information which it would then seem obliged to carry. One of the many *reductiones ad absurdum* of pluralism by which idealism thinks it proves the absolute One is as follows: let there be many facts; but since on idealist principles facts exist only by being known, the many facts will therefore mean many knowers. But that there are so many knowers is itself a fact, which in turn requires *its* knower, so the one absolute knower has eventually to be brought in. *All* facts lead to him. If it be a fact that this table is not a chair, not a rhinoceros, not a logarithm, not a mile away from the door, not worth five hundred pounds sterling, not a thousand centuries old, the absolute must even now be articulately aware of all these negations. Along with what everything is it must also be conscious of everything which it is not. This infinite atmosphere of explicit negativity – observe that it has to be explicit – around everything seems to us so useless an encumbrance as to make the absolute still more foreign to our sympathy. Furthermore, if it be a fact that certain ideas are silly, the absolute has to have already thought the silly ideas to establish them in silliness. The rubbish in its mind would thus appear easily to outweigh in amount the more desirable material. One would expect it fairly to burst with such an obesity, plethora and superfoetation of useless information.¹⁵

I will spare you further objections. The sum of it all is that the absolute is not forced on our belief by logic, that it involves features of irrationality peculiar to itself, and that a thinker to whom it does not come as an 'immediate certainty' (to use Mr Joachim's words) is in no way bound to treat it as anything but an emotionally rather sublime hypothesis. As such, it might, with all its defects, be, on account of its peace-conferring power and its formal grandeur, more rational than anything else in the field. But meanwhile the strung-along unfinished world in time is its rival: *reality MAY exist in distributive form, in the shape not of an all but of a set of eaches, just as it seems to* – this is the anti-absolutist hypothesis. *Prima facie* there is this in favour of the eaches, that they are at any rate real enough to have made themselves at least *appear* to everyone, whereas

the absolute has as yet appeared immediately to only a few mystics, and indeed to them very ambiguously. The advocates of the absolute assure us that any distributive form of being is infected and undermined by self-contradiction. If we are unable to assimilate their arguments, and we have been unable, the only course we can take, it seems to me, is to let the absolute bury the absolute, and to seek reality in more promising directions, even among the details of the finite and the immediately given.

If these words of mine sound in bad taste to some of you, or even sacrilegious, I am sorry. Perhaps the impression may be mitigated by what I have to say in later lectures.

Notes

1. Hegel, *Smaller Logic*, pp. 184–5.
2. Cf. Hegel's fine vindication of this function of contradiction in his *Wissenschaft der Logik*, Bk ii, sec. 1, chap. ii. C. Anmerkung 3.
3. Hegel, in Blackwood's Philosophical Classics, p. 162.
4. *Wissenschaft der Logik*, Bk i. sec. 1, chap. ii. B. a.
5. Wallace's translation of the *Smaller Logic*, p. 128.
6. Joachim, *The Nature of Truth* (Oxford, 1906), pp. 22, 178. The argument in case the belief should be doubted would be the higher synthetic idea; if two truths were possible, the duality of that possibility would itself be the one truth that would unite them.
7. *The World and the Individual*, Vol. ii, pp. 385, 386, 409.
8. The best uninspired argument (again not ironical!) which I know is that in Miss M. W. Calkins' excellent book, *The Persistent Problems of Philosophy* (Macmillan, 1907).
9. Cf. Dr Fuller's excellent article, 'Ethical monism and the problem of evil', in the *Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. i, No. 2, April 1908.
10. *Metaphysic*, sec. 79.
11. *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic*, secs. 150, 153.
12. *The Nature of Truth* (1906), pp. 170–1.
13. *ibid.*, p. 179.
14. The psychological analogy that certain finite tracts of consciousness are composed of isolable parts added together cannot be used by absolutists as proof that such parts are essential elements of all consciousness. Other finite fields of consciousness seem in point of fact not to be similarly resolvable into isolable parts.
15. Judging by the analogy of the relation which our central consciousness seems to bear to that of our spinal cord, lower ganglia etc., it would seem natural to suppose that in whatever superhuman mental synthesis there may be, the neglect and elimination of certain contents of which we are conscious on the human level might be as characteristic a feature as is the combination and interweaving of other human contents.

The reform of Hegelian dialectic (1912)

Giovanni Gentile

[3] Chapter 1. The dialectic of the content of thought and the dialectic of thinking¹

The core of Hegelian idealism is the concept of dialectic, the soul of logic and the fundamental law of reality in all its forms. This dialectic is as vastly different from Platonic dialectic as the categories or pure concepts of the Transcendental Logic in the *Critique of Pure Reason* are from Plato's Ideas and Aristotle's universals, and its character cannot be more plainly indicated than by this very contrast of the category with the Platonic Idea and the Aristotelian universals.

Hegel certainly highlighted the *a priori* nature of the synthesis, in other words the originality and absoluteness of the *relation* by which the concepts were dialectically linked with each other, but to concentrate exclusively on this facet of Hegelian dialectic would be to miss its essential feature.

For even in Plato's theory of dialectic² the Ideas are conceived as essentially constituting a system; and Aristotle allows validity only to the propositional or indicative mode of discourse, which requires and implies the synthesis of concepts *συνθεσις της νοημάτων*.³ The same applies to all the formal logic evolved from Aristotle's *Analytics*, even in its most degenerate forms, medieval terminism [4], and modern empirical nominalism. Being wholly based on the epistemological presupposition, which is of unmistakable Platonic provenance, of the absolute objectivity of the truth, with which logically correct thought accords, it could not depart, and never did depart, from the idea that the truth is attained by means of logical construction modelled on the connections of the real, or alternatively of experience, which the empiricist conceives as a system of data outside the mind into which experience is gathered.

Undoubtedly the Kantian theory of the *a priori* synthesis has led to a

much keener awareness of this truth of the absolute relation between concepts, which had earlier been clearly stated by the greatest Greek philosophers; but it is no less certain that this keener awareness peculiar to post-Kantian idealism is due to the new character with which the old concept of relation reappears as it were rejuvenated and reanimated in the Critical philosophy. This new character has two distinctive marks, which on reflection come down to one. In Kant's Transcendental Logic *relation* (1) is not a *connection of concepts*, but is itself a *concept*, and (2) is no longer an objective character of the truth, but an *activity of the subject* who apprehends the truth.

Kant's *a priori* synthesis is a category, which is not an object of thought. It is not something thought of, or, really, something that admits of being thought of, since, as a transcendental function, it is prior to experience, in which everything thinkable gradually gets thought by virtue of the category itself. Therefore it certainly is a concept, but one that is transcendental and so immanent in the concepts that we find ourselves thinking as connected in the synthesis of experience: these presuppose it and hence appear with respect to it in all their *a posteriori* nature. So if the elements of the synthesis are to be called concepts, they are such by virtue of a concept on which they depend, and without which they would in no way be present to thought; [5] this is therefore the original concept, the true concept, or *pure concept*.

This pure concept, however, bears no resemblance to the empirical concepts that are indebted to it for their excogitation. It constitutes the object of experience, the (intelligible) object in which all empirical concepts emerge. As such it can never figure in the sequence of these concepts, and, strictly speaking, it cannot be something thought of. It is thought itself as the act of thinking, by which the thing thought of is constituted. It is not *conceptum* but *concupere* or *conceptus* in the precise Spinozistic definition.⁴ Just because it is *concupere* and not *conceptum*, the Kantian transcendental relation or synthesis can be rescued – in Kant the rescue begins – from the equivocal position to which relation was relegated in Platonic dialectic and Aristotelian logic, the position of mere liaison between concepts, as though concepts were primary and relation secondary. Once the nature of concepts is understood, with Kant, to be a product of the category, any originality (objectivity) of concepts considered on their own is ruled out, and the true concept becomes the very act of conceiving.

If, then, by dialectic is meant the science of relation, it may be said that Plato's ancient dialectic is the dialectic of what is thought of, whereas the new dialectic, required by the Kantian doctrine of the categories, is the dialectic of thinking.

Between the two dialectics there is a gulf, the gulf dividing modern from ancient idealism. The dialectic of what is thought of may be styled

the dialectic of death, and the dialectic of thinking the dialectic of life. For the fundamental presupposition of the former is reality or truth wholly determined *ab aeterno*, so that it is no longer possible to conceive of a fresh determination in the sense [6] of an effective determination of reality. On such a presupposition, the advancement of learning (and in general the whole life of the world) can only be the vain dream of a shadow:⁵ the fading of vain, insubstantial and pointless pageants on the unchanging world stage of an empty theatre. How can one find in Platonism the explanation of the genesis of souls and of the world in all its infinite variety?⁶ Given the ideas in their inherent relations, nothing that ever happens, including human dialectic, which raises itself from the shadows of the worldly prison house to contemplate the living sun of the Good or the One,⁷ can be pictured as even the slightest ripple on the surface of a measureless ocean that is forever still. Given even Heraclitus' ever-living fire, the perpetual flux, and war the sire of all things,⁸ then since all this is a world that is thought of, and therefore admitting of being thought of, eternally admitting of being thought of, and therefore already determined *ab aeterno*, that fire will burn as little as a painted fire; since, if it really burned, the combustion would imply a novelty, an absolute novelty, which is ruled out by the conception of reality as determined *ab aeterno*. Given the atoms with their perpetual downward fall, or whatever sort of motion belongs to them *ab aeterno*,⁹ there is no longer the possibility of any event that is a genuine event, in the sense of something new that would change the essence of reality. Objectivism of every kind stagnates in this lifeless pool of a reality that is already realized.

The dialectic of thinking, on the other hand, does not acknowledge a world that is there already, which would be something thought of. It does not presuppose a reality beyond consciousness that the latter would have to appropriate; because it knows, as Kant has shown, that everything that can be thought of as real (the thinkable, the concepts of experience) presupposes the very act of thinking. It therefore regards this act as the root of everything. So everything that exists, exists by virtue of thinking, and thinking is thus no longer a posthumous and futile effort exerted when there is nothing left to do in the world, [7] but is the cosmogony itself. In the new dialectic the history of thought accordingly becomes the course of events, and the course of events is no longer conceivable except as the history of thought. Ancient man felt himself sadly cut off from reality, from God. Modern man feels God in himself, and extols in the power of spirit the essential divinity of the world.

[8] Chapter II. The problem of the deduction of the categories

This is not the place to recount the historical passage from the Kantian doctrine of the categories as *a priori* synthesis to the problem of Hegelian dialectic. Undeniably, however, the point of view which Hegel has already reached with his *Phenomenology*, and from which he starts in the *Science of Logic*, is that outlined in the preceding pages. Hegel has set foot on the firm ground that reality is thought itself, and the true concept, the only real concept, is conceiving; or, as he says in the *Phenomenology*, all knowledge is resolved into absolute knowledge, i.e. into the *Idea*, as a system of categories in the Kantian sense, which is precisely the principle of the new dialectic. In Hegel, the science of the *Idea* is the science of relation, of synthesis, or, to put it more clearly, of the synthetic and relating activity: a science of thought, but in the sense not of something thought of, but of thinking. His *Idea* is the unity of *being* and *essence*, which is to say of subject (the immediate) and predicate (mediation); it is precisely the category productive of the synthetic *a priori* judgment, to which Kant had shown every real act of thought comes down. And Hegel makes every effort to fathom the abstruse process bringing about this unity of the *Idea*, which is the life of thought, not, I repeat, in the sense of what is thought of, but in the sense of thinking or category. This abstruse process of the *Idea* ought to incorporate, as its phases or as phases of its phases, all the concepts [9] that constitute thought as thinking: all the categories. For the *Idea* just is the totality of transcendental thought.

But how is the number of categories to be established? [And can there be a fixed number of categories?]¹⁰ Kant had provided a merely empirical deduction of them, analysing the forms of judgment offered to him by experience. Fichte had shown the need for an *a priori* and genuinely systematic deduction. Hegel followed along this path, striving to overcome the host of difficulties clustering around this problem of the combined multiplicity and unity of the categories by packing the multiplicity as tightly as he could in the triunity of the *Idea*, which is thought itself, all fitting neatly together and forming a perfect unity in its absolute transcendental character. Whether his effort was, or could have been, successful has not hitherto been methodically discussed, and it is a point of crucial importance for the theory of thought as thinking. Since if it be true, as I believe I have shown elsewhere,¹¹ that multiplicity belongs to thought in the sense of what is thought of, the very inquiry into the number of categories, whether explicit as in Kant, or implicit as in Hegel, means straying off the course along which the transcendental problem of the categories that constitute thinking both arises and ought to be pursued.

Although Hegel in fact numbers the categories in his deduction, he

certainly intends to undo their numbering by means of his dialectical method, thanks to the law of *supersession* (*aufheben*) or the notional existence abiding in the real, which at the very outset of his deduction he calls a most important concept and a fundamental determination that reappears at every turn.¹² Consequently all the multiplicity of the Hegelian categories boils down in the end to the concrete category (the only concrete category) of the absolute Idea, and hence to absolute unity. But the trouble just is [10] that this dialectical process, in which reality is mediated, and which therefore contains within itself an intrinsic notional existence, in other words a phase that is already superseded and preserved, this process, which is the concrete form or realization of the Idea, can be multiplied only from the empirical or historical point of view, not from the transcendental point of view; and for it to appear susceptible of further mediations, as takes place in Hegel's logic, it has got to be transformed from a process of thinking into a process of the content of thought. If we call this thinking *Idea*, then the process is *being*, *essence* (negation of the immediacy of being) and concept (in the sense of *conceiving*) or Idea. Here, however, being is not something thought of but a notional phase of the act of thinking: as such, it does not play the part of an abstract concept whose union with the other equally abstract concept of essence is to yield, in the shape of the unity, the concrete concept. It is an abstract phase of the act of thinking, which is not consummated as an act until after this phase, and therefore if arrested at this phase it is strangled at birth.

To mediate this phase which, I repeat, is not a concept, it would have to be considered as itself an act of thinking, which in some primitive and rudimentary fashion is already consummated on its own. That is obviously impossible except on one condition: that the abstract is treated as though it were concrete. Now to treat the abstract as concrete is to detach, if only provisionally, the part from the whole in which its reality lies. But once the part is detached from the whole, the part becomes a whole, and the process of the part cannot but be the same as the process of the whole. The being which belongs to the main triad in Hegelian logic is mediated within itself, in that it finds already in itself an immediacy and the negation of this immediacy: another being and another essence, of which it is the Idea: *quality*, *quantity*, *measure*. The same applies to quality, which appears as *being for self*, the unity of *being* (a third being) and of *determinate being*; and it applies [11] again to this last being, which appears as becoming, or the unity of *being* (a fourth being) and of *non-being*. Being (pure being), determinate being, quality and measure thus turn out to be four grades of being, which is fully developed only in the fourth grade as the first phase of the main triad (being—essence—concept). But what is the difference between the first and the second grade? Determinate being is the mediation of pure or indeterminate being. This,

however, is also the difference between the second and the third grade, between the third and the fourth, and between the fourth and, ultimately, the concept. So the concept is the concept of measure; but measure is the concept of quality, and quality the concept of determinate being, and determinate being the concept of indeterminate being: or (which comes to the same thing) determinate being is the becoming of pure indeterminate being, and quality the becoming of determinate being, and measure the becoming of quality, and the concept the becoming of being as measure. Whether the reconciling and concrete form of the thinking act or category is called *becoming* or *concept* (conceiving, thinking), we always have the same (dialectical) process, with variation only in the terms of the connection: it is always the becoming of a certain being or the concept of a certain measure (= being). Being varies, and becoming varies as the correlate of being. Becoming in its dialectical character, the restlessness (*Unruhe*) spoken of by Hegel, does not and cannot change.

[12] Chapter III. Thought as the sole category

Yet does being really change? The old Hegelianism holds with Hegel that it does. The new Hegelianism is convinced that the only change of being is its becoming; and this is the genuine characteristic of what might be styled specifically *actual idealism* because it insists on the concept of the idea act. In the actuality of the idea, which is becoming or concept (thinking), there is no indeterminate that is not absolutely so, no immediate that is not absolutely immediate, in short, no being that is not pure being. There is not the more determinate and the less determinate, but the indeterminate and the determinate: the real (act of thinking) as determinate, which has superseded the indeterminate and contains it within itself: in short, the becoming of being. Actual idealism regards the change of being, and hence diverse and manifold being, as outside the actuality of thought, in the thing thought of considered abstractly in Platonic fashion: in other words, in the category itself made into a content of thought, and converted from transcendental thought into empirical thought, regarded as detached from the self, which is nevertheless active in empirical thought itself.

As it is firmly convinced of the reality of being in thought, it can no longer admit a realm of ideas or any kind of being that would transcend the actuality of thought as thinking; and it points out that any work of thought (for example, all Hegel's *Logic*) is real in the unique act of thought which thinks it, and only there has its truth. Therefore, it is no longer a matter of seeing if being as [13] measure is different from simple indeterminate being; it is only a matter of knowing if, when thought takes measure as a factor in terms of which it is actually thinking, it can

see in measure something more than the absolute indeterminacy in which pure being as the initial factor of becoming comes to consist. If this is so, it is clear, or so it seems to me, that the problem of the deduction of the categories ought to be handled very differently from the way in which it is done in Hegel; and that Hegel's deduction ought to be considered as one case among an infinite number of possible cases of deduction, or rather as itself a *fragment or factor of the eternal deduction which makes up the history not only of thought as ordinarily understood but also of the world*. For since thought is dialectical, since it is always a live determination (self-determination) of the indeterminate, any thought is a triadic process of categories. Any subject and predicate are factors of the category which is the judgment in which they live; and every thought is a category because to think is to judge; and since everything is thought, everything is category too. Hence, there is no philosophy of nature and no philosophy of spirit *besides* logic; and hence the deduction is never exhausted; and Hegel's logic is true, to the extent that any logic is true, like any flash of thought, and any rustle of leaves (understood in its intrinsic self-creative and therefore spiritual inwardness).

On the other hand, actual idealism has no mind to get lost in the imaginary infinite of an interminable dialectical process. It knows that this is a bogus infinite, a construction based on the seeming multiplicity of thoughts, as though there were a plurality of judgments or a plurality of acts of thought. Thought is single and unmultipliable; and in this unity it is genuinely infinite, qua thinking. What is thought of is manifold; but when what is thought of is grasped in its concreteness, because it is what is thought of by thinking, or thought itself [14] in its concreteness (self-consciousness), all its multiplicity is fused into the unity of thinking. Accordingly, all *acts* of thought, when they are not considered as mere *facts*, when they are not looked at from the outside, are one single act. In conclusion, the categories are infinite in number, qua categories of thinking which is considered as content of thought (history); and they are one sole category, qua category of thinking in its actuality.

It might therefore be shown that where, in Hegel's deduction, you see dialectical activity, you have the genuine restlessness of thinking, and consequently the infinite, and so unmultipliable, unity of the category; and where you are confronted with diversity, the variety of the categories, dialectical activity ceases and up again bobs the lifeless finitude of the content of thought, as in ancient dialectic.

[15] Chapter IV. Hegel's concept of becoming

The lack of a clear apprehension of the conception which we have elucidated, of the absolute actuality of the idea as category, is perhaps the

main cause of all the defects found in the structure of Hegelianism, and it begins to operate from the very first steps taken by the great idealist in the deduction of his categories. For the problem of becoming as the unity of being and non-being is really the whole problem of dialectic. Among the numerous expositions of it which have been essayed, the plainest is still Hegel's own first systematic exposition given in the *Science of Logic*; and it is so succinct that it is worth quoting in full:

Being, pure being – without any other determination. In its immediate indeterminacy, it is equal only to itself, and is not even unequal to anything else, it has no difference inside it or outside. With any kind of determination or content that would make it internally different or different from anything else, it would no longer be preserved in its purity. It is pure indeterminacy and pure emptiness. There is nothing to see in it, if one can talk here of seeing; or rather it is only this pure empty sight itself. Nor again is there anything in it to think of, or it is equally only this empty thinking. Being, the immediate indeterminate, is in fact *nothing*, neither more nor less than nothing.

Nothing, pure nothing; it is simple identity with itself, perfect emptiness, absence of determination and content; undifferentiatedness in itself. So far as one can talk here of seeing and thinking, there is a difference between seeing or thinking of something [16] or nothing. To see or think of nothing has therefore a meaning; if the two things are distinguished, it means that nothing is (exists) in our seeing and thinking; or rather that it is empty sight or thought itself; and the same empty sight or thought as pure being. – So nothing is the same determination, or rather absence of determination, and thus, in sum, the same as pure being.

Pure being and pure nothing are therefore the same. The truth is neither being nor nothing, but that being (does not pass, but) has passed into nothing, and nothing into being. But equally the truth is not their undifferentiatedness, but that they are not the same, that they are absolutely different but also inseparable and inseparable, and immediately *each one disappears into its opposite*. The truth is therefore this *movement* of the immediate disappearance of one into the other: becoming; a movement in which the two terms are different, but with a difference that is patched up equally immediately.¹³

This sameness, which is not immediate but resulting from the passage of being into nothing or non-being (*Nichtsein*), an expression which Hegel also uses a little later, and of non-being into being, is what Hegel calls the 'unity of being and nothing'. And in a note on this deduction he remarks that 'the unity of the two phases, of being and non-being, in so far as they are inseparable, is at the same time distinct from them, and

is with respect to them a *third thing*, which in its most proper form is *becoming*'.¹⁴

He goes on, however, to throw more light on the unity itself, observing that 'becoming, coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be, is the inseparateness of being and nothing, not the unity that leaves out being and nothing; but, as a unity of being and nothing, it is this determinate unity, in which there is both being and nothing'. Being does not occur as being, separated from nothing; nor does the latter occur as nothing, separated from being; both occur in the unity, in so far as they are evanescent [17] (*verschwindende*), only in so far as they are *superseded*. They have to come down from self-subsistence to being phases that are still distinct but superseded.

The difference does not get obliterated, but each of the two terms is a unity of itself and the other.

Becoming therefore contains being and nothing as *two such unities*, each of which is itself a unity of being and nothing: in one, being is present straightaway and forms a link with nothing; in the other, nothing is present straightaway and forms a link with being.

There are thus two sides to becoming: on the one it has nothing straightaway, i.e. it starts from nothing and passes into being; on the other what it has straightaway is being, and it moves from being and passes into nothing: coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be.¹⁵

Now, it does not take much effort (if we have got hold of the conception of the actuality of the idea) to realize that all this deduction is out of line with the essential aim of Hegelian dialectic; and indeed it makes possible the pre-eminently anti-dialectical conception, at which the deduction promptly arrives, of the neutralization of becoming in the outcome, whereby, just as being fades into non-being, becoming in its turn is to fade into the negation of becoming: *Verschwinden des Verschwindenden*. And Hegel is led on to say that 'das Werden ist eine haltungslose Unruhe, die in ein ruhiges Resultat zusammensinkt'.¹⁶ The whole deduction turns into an analysis of concepts designed to uncover the identity of opposites underlying their difference.

'This', he later says in the *Encyclopaedia*,

is one of the hardest parts of the task of thought; since being and nothing are components of the antithesis in all their *immediacy*, without there being already *stated* in one a determination that would contain its relation to the other. However, they *contain* [18] this determination [viz. of not containing any determination]: the determination which is just the same in both. The deduction . . . is to that extent wholly *analytical*; as all the procedure of philosophy, being methodical,

i.e. *necessary*, is nothing but the explicit *statement* of what is already contained in a concept.¹⁷

This proposition hardly sounds Hegelian if Hegel's logic is meant to be dialectical. For the analytical process is the (apparent) process of Aristotelian logic governed by the principle of identity, whereas the genuine Hegelian process is that of the *a priori* synthesis, in which it is not the identical but the different that is unified. Analysis, which renders the implicit explicit, presupposes a concept on its own and a potentiality of thought preceding the actuality, and hence an objective reality: all the old Platonic views. Hegel really knows that pure identity (and consequently pure analysis) is not enough. Immediately after the passage quoted from the *Encyclopaedia* he hastens to remark: 'It is, however, no less correct to say that being and nothing are *quite different* than to assert their unity [= identity]: – the one is not what the other is.' But he goes on: 'Only since the difference is here not yet determinate – because being and nothing are still the immediate – it remains, in the way in which it exists between them, something that cannot be put into words, mere opinion.'¹⁸ This falls far below what he had said in the *Science of Logic*:

The proposition [being and nothing are one and the same] *contains* the result, implicitly is the result. But what is to be noticed here is the defect that the result is not itself *expressed* in the proposition; it is an external reflection which describes the result in it.

He meant that the [19] proposition expresses the result of a process which is the reconciliation of a contradiction, in other words the identification of two different terms; and does not express the process in which this difference, too, ought to appear. To put it otherwise, Hegel is pointing out that his kind of identity is not like Aristotle's, the exclusion of contradiction, but includes it.

Furthermore, he was anxious to underline the need to distinguish between the imperfect form imposed by a reflection external to the dialectical process and the intrinsic nature of this process. Accordingly, he added the general observation that

the proposition, in the *form of a judgement*, is not suited to express speculative truths . . . because the judgement is a relation of identity between subject and predicate, where no notice is taken of the fact that the subject has other characteristics besides the predicate, and the latter is of wider extension than the subject. Now if the content is speculative, even the non-identical side of subject and predicate is an essential factor; but this does not get expressed in a judgement.

Lastly, Hegel remarked that when it is said that being and nothing are unity, this word 'unity', even more than 'identity', expresses a subjective comparison, as though it were a relation deriving from a comparison. It would be better to say that being and nothing are inseparable and inseparable, if this did not leave the positive side unexpressed. In short, he concluded, the result of the deduction, becoming, is not the one-sided and abstract unity of being and nothing, but

consists in this movement: that pure being is immediate and simple, and for this reason is just as much pure nothing; that there *is* a difference between them, but it is also true that it is *cancelled* (*sich aufhebt*) and there *isn't*. The result, then, asserts the difference, too, of being and nothing, but as a difference that is only opined.¹⁹

[20] Chapter V. Critique of Hegel's concept of becoming

In Hegel's doctrine it is clear that becoming involves a difference underlying the sameness of being and nothing; but it all comes down to a postulate: being and nothing are identified, ergo they must have been different. But how were they different? In what did the difference consist?

Trendelenburg²⁰ is going to say that there is no difference and that therefore there is no sign of the beginning of dialectic, the contradiction spoken of by Hegel. Hegel himself, feeling the need for the difference and being unable to deduce becoming analytically except from the identity, fell back, as we have seen, on the *opinion* that there is a difference. But in what does this opinion consist? It is the assertion of something that cannot be put into words, according to the passage quoted from the *Encyclopaedia*. The point is put more clearly in the *Science of Logic*:²¹

Opinion is that being is on the contrary what is altogether other than what nothing is, and that nothing is clearer than their absolute difference, and apparently nothing is easier than to formulate this difference. It is, however, just as easy to convince oneself that this is impossible, and that the difference *cannot be put into words*. *Those who will insist on the difference between being and nothing should challenge themselves to say in what it consists.*

If being and nothing had any kind of determination to distinguish them, they would, as mentioned before, be determinate being and determinate nothing, not pure being and [21] pure nothing, as they still are here. Their difference, then, is quite empty; each of the pair is in the same manner the indeterminate; hence the difference does not lie in them but only in a third thing, *opinion*. But opinion is a form of subjectivity, which does not fall within this sequence of the

exposition.²² The third thing, however, in which being and nothing have their subsistence, must also turn up here; and it has turned up here – it is becoming.

In this they function as different components; it is only to the extent that they are different that there is any such category as becoming. This third thing is something other than themselves; – they subsist only in something else, which is to say that they are not self-subsistent.

Becoming is the subsistence as much of being as of non-being, or, their subsistence is only their being in *unity*; this subsistence of theirs is precisely what at the same time cancels (*aufhebt*) their difference.

There are, it seems to me, two comments to be made on this: (1) If opinion, to which the fact of a difference is due, does not fall within the actuality of the logical process of becoming (because, as a form of subjectivity, it belongs according to Hegel to the first section of the logic of the concept), it is not possible to talk about difference in the categories of becoming without going beyond the actuality of the process by resorting to that external reflection to which, as we have seen, Hegel attributes the form of the judgment, 'Being and nothing are the same': a form that is extraneous and therefore inadequate to express the act of identifying the opposites, though it ought to do so. In other words, there is no difference logically between pure being and pure nothing in their indeterminacy. And that is the end of the identification, and the last to be seen of dialectic. (2) If the logical third thing, in which the real connection of being and nothing is to be sought, is not opinion but becoming, becoming will presuppose and supersede the difference, but this will not help to shed any light on the way to satisfy the postulate mentioned previously. For likewise in the later development of the logic, in categories where there is no lack of the determinateness which is missing from the thesis and antithesis which have their synthesis in becoming, the synthesis [22] presupposes the difference as something that has already been intrinsically superseded; but there this supersession of the difference does not involve the impossibility of stating the difference before its supersession. The absence of determinateness here, if it implies identity, cannot imply, or be compatible with, difference as well.

To sum up, it must in the end be admitted that Hegel has a hazy view of becoming but does not have the concept of becoming. And he does not put himself in a position to get hold of it because he analyses this concept instead of realizing it, as he ought to have done, in order to think of it dialectically and in conformity with the principle of the identity of being and thought.

(23) Chapter VI. Interpretations of Hegel's concept of becoming

Just because Hegel strenuously asserted the essentiality of the concept of becoming, without succeeding in determining it himself, the main problem, the hardest problem, that he bequeathed to later philosophers who reached his point of view, or believed they had, was that of gaining a clear understanding of the first categories of the logic, in which it ought to be possible to recognize the dialectical nature of thought. A detailed history of the wanderings of the Hegelian school over the ground of the first logical categories would make quite interesting reading.²³ For, ever since 1824, when Hinrichs published his attempt at a dialectical treatment of formal logic (*Grundlinien einer Philosophie der Logik*), many followers of Hegel have tried to touch up and polish this fundamental part of the master's teaching. The younger Fichte and Weisse abandoned it entirely, disengaging logic from metaphysics: the former in his *Grundzüge zum System der Philosophie*, the first part of which (1833) is dedicated to logic and the second (1836) to ontology, and the latter in his *Metaphysik* (1835). But Werder's *Logik* was intended as a commentary on, and completion of, Hegel's logic; it did not get beyond a first fascicle (1841) [24] containing the doctrine of quality. Erdmann's *Grundriss der Logik und Metaphysik* (1841; 3rd edn, 1848) is a faithful, though rather elementary, exposition, with no attempt at reform except in terminology. Revisions with claims to originality were, however, produced by Fischer, Weissenborn²⁴ and Rosenkranz,²⁵ not to mention expositions in English and French, as well as one in Italian by Spaventa, of which more anon.

Fischer's work was particularly important. After an unsuccessful first attempt at revision,²⁶ he published in 1852 a *Logik und Metaphysik oder Wissenschaftslehre*, as a manual for his university lectures: a concise epitome of Hegel's doctrine lucidly expounded and illuminated in masterly fashion by placing it in its historical context. Fischer, following Werder,²⁷ had the merit of applying his mind to the difficulty brought to light by Trendelenburg's criticism and of suggesting the line to follow for the discovery of the real mainspring of dialectic, which right from the first categories had escaped Hegel's lynx-eyed scrutiny. With a clear awareness of the *transcendentality* or, as he calls it, of the *critical* character of logic, which he therefore regards as theory of knowledge, or theory of the categories, he is quite sure about the *logical* nature of all the categories, i.e. the principle which we call that of the actuality of thought, under which the categories are categories of thinking and not of the content of thought. He is therefore careful to note at the outset [25] that being as a category is *logisches Sein* and thinking (*Denken*) itself which at its dawn says, 'I am being', and in this manner he tries to smooth the way to the discovery of the difference that was missing in Hegel's becoming and to the discovery of an active difference that does not need

external reflection or an external opinion to state it. Being, he says, as an act of thought, is inherently contradictory, because thought, which is movement and determination, is extinguished in the stillness and indeterminacy of being. Being itself (= thought) accordingly explains the negation of being (= non-thought). And therefore being as being is non-being.

And the thought which tries to say: 'I am being', ought to say: 'I am being that does not be.'

Fischer describes as an empty tautology and a sterile identity the stock deduction of becoming, reduced to the equation Being = Nothing, where the two opposites become two different names for the same thing; and as a falsification 'of the spirit of Hegelian logic' the exposition given by Erdmann²⁸ and others who treated non-being as the pure equivalent of being. 'Non-being', he said,

is the inherent contradiction of being; being contradicts itself, because it contradicts thought, and if being is not considered as an *act of thought* (as *thinking being*), no contradiction can be found in it, nor does it admit of any dialectical development. [26] If being were really that *vacuum* [as Hegel too had called it], non-being could never signify the *vacuum* over again, but would then be the *non-vacuum*, or in the *vacuum* the *horror vacui*, in other words the inherent contradiction of the vacuum.²⁹

[27] Chapter VII. The reform of Hegelian dialectic essayed by Bertrando Spaventa

Even in Fischer's exposition the skein is not untangled. Our own countryman Spaventa set out on the same path as Fischer in his essay of 1864, 'The first categories of Hegel's logic',³⁰ making profound observations to inject the animation of thought as thinking into the category of being; but he did not at that time go beyond Fischer's position. Nor did he go beyond it in his *Logic and Metaphysics* (1867), where, condensing the studies of three years earlier, he deduced non-being as follows:³¹

The only distinction, within which being is possible, is thinking itself: the *act* of thinking. Qua this distinction, I, as simple thinking, can just disregard myself as thinking, as doing the thinking, and simply *concentrate* on the thing thought of. The thing thought of, in this way, is being. By concentrating on being, I *do not distinguish myself* as the thought of being; I *extinguish myself* in being, I am being.

This *self-extinguishing* of thinking in being is the *self-contradiction of being*. Being contradicts itself, because this self-extinguishing of

thought in being – and it is only in this way that being is possible – is a non-extinguishing; [28] it is a *self-distinguishing*. To think unthinkingly, to disregard thinking, i.e. to concentrate on being, is to think; it is abstraction, and therefore thinking. Being is the *abstract*, and nothing but the abstract, the absolute abstract. To get the abstract, and nothing but the abstract, I disregard the abstracting, i.e. I am *abstracting*, absolute abstracting. Thus being, logical being, negates itself. First I was being (the abstract): now I am *non-being* (abstracting); I am *being that is non-being*.

Non-being is not the erasure of being but more than simple being.

The flaw here – a flaw which is enough to destroy the dialectical character of thought – is the permanent duality of abstract and abstracting. For, granting that abstracting (= thinking) could and should disregard itself to extinguish itself in being, being would for that very reason come to be conceived as other than thinking, as its absolute negation; and the awakening of thought in the object in which it had been extinguished (*awareness*, as Werder had already called it) could be regarded only as a reflection extraneous to the object asserted by abstracting, and therefore as something that did not belong. If the self-extinguishing is genuine, the distinction is no longer conceivable (thought has committed suicide!); if thought, in the very act of asserting being, draws a distinction, it is not asserting the being that is the absence of any distinction. For the self-extinguishing and self-distinguishing to meet and coincide, thought would have to extinguish itself not in something else (being) but in itself. That is to say, being as well as non-being would have to be thinking. This is obviously both Fischer's and Spaventa's goal; but it is not yet reached.

Fischer, however, fell further and further back. In the expanded revision of his work, carried out in 1865,³² [29] though continuing to insist that being is *Begriff* and *Denkakt*, he increasingly detaches it from the live *Denkakt* which plays its part in the second phase of becoming. 'As concept', he says,

(being) excludes all distinctions from itself; it is this concept only qua undistinguished unity. As object (of thought) it excludes the thinking activity, which is at the same time a distinguishing activity; and yet without this it is obviously impossible as concept. This is the contradiction inherent in the concept of being.

Being is the object at one time, and the act of thought at another. It ought to be the act qua object.

Nevertheless, in 1865 Fischer maintains the position (without taking full advantage of it) that for the dialectic of being to be possible, being must be regarded as a pure concept, a category, and the category must

be regarded as an act of thought; and he still declares that obliviousness to this is Hegel's notorious aberration (*Fehler*), 'subsequently repeated in a gross form within his school': whereby being and non-being become two opposite names, not two opposite characteristics (*zwei entgegengesetzte Namen, nicht zwei entgegengesetzte Merkmale*). In 1901, however, in the course of his large-scale account of Hegel's doctrine, he first slavishly reproduces Hegel's deduction:

Just as the last and highest categories contain all the preceding ones as superseded phases, so the first and lowest categories contain all the later ones in the form of undeveloped seeds. This thought which is comprised in being, but is still entirely undeveloped, and so without content, is equally pure and empty, equally being and nothing. Being and nothing are the same, because they are the expression of pure thought in its simplest form; being is its positive expression, nothing its negative one. Being is nothing, because there is nothing in it to know, since it is without content and vacuous. But being and nothing are not only identical but also different: being means that being is; nothing means [30] that it is still entirely without development and content.

Then he adds rather naively:

Nothing can be plainer than this unity and this difference of being and non-being; we must necessarily pass from the concept of being, because there is nothing in it to know besides the absence of content and vacuity, to, and only to, the concept of nothing. These two logical determinations, being and nothing, are inseparable and inseparable: this inseparateness or inseparability, as Hegel points out expressly, constitutes their unity, which is therefore by no means sameness but implies difference and requires unification.³³

Here, as anyone can see for himself, Fischer has lost his awareness of the difficulties that Hegelian dialectic, by affecting to analyse concepts, was bound to meet, and did meet, in the way of achieving this unification of the different, which is just what constitutes dialectic.

Spaventa, on the other hand, far from going back on his recognition of Hegel's error and the need for a reform of the new dialectic, pressed on towards the goal, and it can be shown from an unpublished manuscript of his, which has recently been discovered, that he had even reached it, really establishing the principle of dialectic as *Wissenschaftslehre*. In his essay of 1864 he had already given considerably greater depth to Werder's and Fischer's view of the logical or mental actuality of the category. Being was for him still the thing thought of and not thinking; i.e. thinking

as something thought of. But in this thing thought of he caught a glimpse of thinking, although the subject's becoming an object to itself still seemed more like a disability (a theme developed by another Italian Hegelian, Antonia Tari)³⁴ than the [31] exercise of the real power of thought.

I think of being; and in so far as I think of being, I am thinking, I am non-being; in so far as I disregard myself as abstracting, I am abstracting. But I do not think of thinking, I do not think of it as thinking, I think of it once more only as something thought of. I cannot catch myself thinking or non-being; I catch myself as being: as thinking, I am being that is non-being. This saying: I am thinking, and not being able to catch myself thinking – this restlessness, this being which is restlessness itself – this is becoming. (I cannot catch the act as an act, as an effort, as, I would say, *agens*; when the act is caught, it is no longer an act, it is *actum*.)³⁵

What is seriously wrong here is this failure to recognize in the *actum* the very *actus* of the active effort, the inability to perceive the unity of thinking and what is thought of (the latter as the former itself). But at any rate it is acknowledged that we *need* to recognize the *actus* in the *actum*, in short to find out how what is thought of is thinking itself.

Spaventa sees the goal right from 1864, though he has no clear idea of the way to reach it.

Why, then, is there the nay, non-being, negation? and why is it after and notwithstanding the yea, being, affirmation? Why is there not only the yea? Why is not everything being? This is the very problem of the world, the enigma of life, in its maximum logical simplicity.

To this question he replies as follows:

What we know is that without thinking there would not be the nay, there would not be non-being; and the power which says nay, which vanquishes the invincible and splits the indivisible, i.e. being: which distinguishes and contrasts within being itself, qua itself, what is and what is not: the begetting or *doubling* of being; the power which troubles the peaceful rest, the dark unbreakable sleep of absolute and unbegotten being, this infinite power, this great *prevaricator*,³⁶ is thinking. If there [32] were nothing but being, there would not be the nay. And when we get down to it, being itself, being on its lonesome, does not say: 'being', it does not say 'it is', it does not say anything. The 'it is' – affirmation itself – is thinking, distinguishing, and concentrating being; it is simplifying being, reducing it to a point, and so doubling it.

Nor does thinking, this prevaricator, intervene in being *ab extra*. Spaventa already recognizes thinking as the inherent act of being that does not be:

It should be noticed that thinking does this, it distinguishes, divides, negates, not because it finds, so to speak, a negative fact, and repeats, copies, observes and sees it in being; but thinking is the first to do this; this affair is *its own* doing and its doing *alone*; negation is its very own originality (a spark that flies out from itself).

This is an idea which he works out more precisely later on.

This negation makes being genuinely being, self-identical and self-fathoming. Being as this self-fathoming (non-being) is 'thinking'. Spaventa says, 'as willing': i.e. the act of thought. He had an inkling of the enormous importance of this, concluding:

Such is therefore for me the genuine meaning of non-being: such is the reform that has to be carried out in the concept of nothing, as found in Hegel's logic. If it is not carried out, Trendelenburg is right; and what is more, Hegelianism as a system of absolute spirituality – since it is nothing but this – is contradicted by the first categories of the logic itself: the foundation of the whole edifice.³⁷

How far this definition of Hegelianism is historically defensible is open to question, since it leads straight to the rejection of the tripartite division of logos, nature and spirit (a division which was accepted by Spaventa himself, who never fully realized the scope of this 'reform'³⁸ proposed by him from 1864 onward); but without doubt it exactly fits the nature of the Hegelian quest, in which [33] spirit itself, like nature and all the logical categories, belongs to a single dialectical process, the truth of which is realized at the end of the process precisely as spirit. From 1864 onward Spaventa insisted on this point, which is a quite fundamental point of the crisis which is now taking place in the heart of Hegelianism; since he considered the objection (to which he was certainly exposed from the strict Hegelian point of view)³⁹ of the illegitimacy of thus introducing a spiritual category like that of thinking into logic, or rather into the first step of logos: where there ought not to be anything but pure objective thought, or the object of pure thought; and he replied that Hegel's logic presupposes the *phenomenology* which, starting from immediate consciousness, reaches a stage or shape in which the *opposition* which marks *consciousness in general* ends and is reconciled: knowing (the subject) and the thing known (the object) have become the same; the subject, as knowing, is no longer a mere ego, a mere subjective operation, but the *act* of reality itself, and the object, as known, is no longer a mere object, a mere reality, but *mentality*; and *the true reality is mind*.⁴⁰

Now, it is a moot point whether it is still possible to return from this position to the phenomenological position re-established by Hegel in the philosophy of spirit, or whether the former is not a position to keep and maintain; but it is incontrovertible that this is the upshot of the phenomenology, and that after this it is more than allowable to consider the logical process as a process of the object of thought which is pure thought itself, or, as I would say, *pure act*.⁴¹ And if Spaventa never abandoned this point of view, he should have been led to discover the logical unity of [34] opposites which is the secret of dialectic, bringing not only non-being but also being itself within this act of thinking.

In fact, in his *Logic* of 1867⁴² he protested against the *strange claim* of certain Hegelians, or rather the majority of them, who would have it that 'being moves all on its own, outside thinking and without thinking'.

Did Spaventa ever return to the crucial problem of dialectic? Hitherto what we had was a short article of his written in 1882: 'Examination of an objection of Teichmüller's to Hegel's dialectic',⁴³ where, combating Teichmüller, he spotlighted the impossibility of understanding Hegelian dialectic by setting on the one side the Idea, considered accordingly as changeless, and on the other side thought, considered as a wholly subjective passage from one idea to another.

In this way thought and idea are two *abstract* entities: the idea is there, without thought, whether thought contemplates it or not; and thought is there, without the idea, and travels at will from one idea to another, under its own power and not under that of the idea. So the motto is: stand back and take a look (*zusehen*); the object is there, and does not move; it is the eye which roves this way and that, to view it on every side. On this interpretation Hegel treats the idea as Herbart treats the datum: he just looks at it. Now this is just the mistake: to reduce the idea to a datum, when it is nothing like a datum; in this way it is deprived of its dialectical nature.

His rebuttal of such a misconception of dialectic ran as follows:

The truth is that thought and idea are what they are, in so far as they are *one*, though *distinct*; and each by itself alone is neither thought nor idea. The idea is such, in so far as it is thought of; and thought is thought, in so far as it thinks of the idea. This unity (and distinction) constitutes the changelessness and the dialectical character [35] of the idea . . . The idea being thought of stimulates, so to speak, the thought which thinks of it, and thought moves; and this movement, in so far as thought and idea are *one*, is a movement of the idea itself, and in this way, and only in this way, does thought pass to another idea.

This drives home in admirable fashion the unity of the categories (which are absolute reality itself) with thought, in other words the conception of the categories as activity; and one might expect the author to reduce being as well as non-being to this activity, thus identifying dialectic with the pure act of thinking. But it was not evident either from this or from other writings of Spaventa's known hitherto that he really had met the requirement implicit in his thought since the essay of 1864.

[36] Chapter VIII. New studies of Spaventa's

The requirement that dialectic be conceived as the act of thinking was, however, met in certain unpublished memoranda of Spaventa's which have not previously been studied.⁴⁴ Their chronology is fixed exactly by the date of the Note on *Protagoras* (June–July 1880) published as an appendix to his book *Experience and Metaphysics*, since the author refers repeatedly to this Note in the memoranda displaying a continued lively interest in its subject matter, and by the date June 1881, which the author wrote in pencil in a marginal addition to these memoranda, when he went over them again.

The relevant matter consists of a lengthy digression upon which Spaventa embarked after setting out to discuss the mishmash [*guazzabuglio*] of materialism and Kantianism served up by A. Mayer, which was known to him through the criticisms of H. H. Studt (*Die materialistische Erkenntnislehre* (Altona, 1869)). The discussion led him to forget Mayer and jot down for his own benefit some 'hairsplittings' [*arzigogoli*] of his on the problem of experience and then on the allied problem of relation. Pursuing this line of inquiry and lighting again on the Hegelian topic of *becoming*, he tried once more to settle the right way to understand this fundamental principle of the dialectic of thought. He did so by means of a scathing criticism of the [37] relevant explanations offered by Augusto Vera in his French translation of the *Encyclopaedia* – Vera was a colleague of his in the University of Naples, whose Hegelianism Spaventa had always held in low regard, although he had never spoken his mind on him in public.⁴⁵ This criticism, which is printed as an appendix hereto,⁴⁶ shows the enormous distance between the facile orthodoxy of Vera, and of the numerous Veras following in the wake of Hegel as of any great thinker, and the brisk, unflinching criticism with which Spaventa endeavoured up to the last years of his life to comprehend that 'seed of a new life' which he espied in Hegel, as in all genuine philosophers: that seed 'which is more than themselves and of which they are not conscious'.⁴⁷ It shows also that Spaventa really did succeed in grasping the principle of idealism, as we understand it today, by doing away with the opposition between logic (*Denken*) and reflection (*Nachdenken*); in other words, by

completely reducing the dialectical process, beginning with being itself, to the pure act of thinking: wherein lies the genuine elimination of the transcendent, and the validation of Hegelianism as transcendental dialectic, and therefore absolute immanentism.

As early as 1861 Spaventa focused his attention on the problem of Hegel's logic as elucidation of knowledge, and felt that the solution could lie only in the proof of the identity of logic with logos, in other words, of thought with the real, or, as he also put it in a vigorous phrase, in 'mentalizing logic': a solution implying the identity of pure thinking with rethinking. But this identity was then something postulated rather than comprehended. For he said: 'To me [38] Hegel's whole merit, here, lies in *proving the identity*. Has he really proved it? That is another question.' And so he had a horror of the mechanical reproduction of Hegelianism. To repeat philosophers mechanically, he declared, is to crush the seed of life that is in them: 'to stop its growing and becoming a new and more perfect system'.⁴⁸

He himself did not crush it. He gradually gave up the philosophy of nature and the philosophy of spirit, not as a result of a critical examination of them but by ceasing to feel any interest in those problems. His mind was entirely occupied and engrossed with the critique of knowledge,⁴⁹ which he had always championed as the new metaphysics, the *metaphysics of mind*; and on this track, as is now evident from this unpublished fragment, he saw quite clearly that with Hegel's deduction of the first categories 'we are going outside logic'.⁵⁰ For the truth is that the grave difficulty which has exercised the minds of commentators on Hegel's logic, and is still exercising them, disappears as soon as dialectic is coolly considered in the light in which Hegel, following Kant and Fichte, had so plainly placed it: in the actuality of thinking. If being is no longer an idea on its own but a category, and a category is a mental act, how can the act of mind be realized except as a unity of being and non-being, i.e. becoming? The act makes itself, *fit*, it comes into being. It is something, to the extent that it comes into being. It cannot be anything before it comes into being. When it is simply an act, it is not. A thing or a Platonic idea is what it is: but a *cogitatum* as *cogitatio*, as *ipsum intelligere* (act), makes itself what it is: its being consists in self-realization. The inseparability of being and non-being on which Hegel insisted is an essential factor of the act [39] of thinking: but it is only one factor, which is complemented by the dynamic factor on which Spaventa insists here, pointing out that being itself negates itself in non-being, by thinking.⁵¹ It was through the radical criticism of the distinction between *Denken* and *Nachdenken* that he managed to come upon this dynamic factor inherent in being.

Was Spaventa aware of the scope of this discovery of his? The very obscurity of his exposition suggests that he was not. Above all, he does

not see (and this accounts for the obscurity) the singular character of dialectical deduction, which is not analytical, and does not start from concepts, because concepts presuppose the act of thinking, which is just to say, dialectic. It is therefore not a demonstration. It is a mistake (a confusion of the new dialectic with the old) to begin by asserting being and then hunt around for the contradiction that is to set it in motion. Contradiction presupposes identity; and this category has no place in transcendental dialectic. To contradict itself being would have to exist, and it exists as becoming: i.e. it does not exist. To search out the contradiction is to peg being, i.e. to falsify it (to go outside mental logical actuality). Therefore the concept of the outcome is fallacious, as was pointed out before. The pure act of thinking is eternal.

This, however, is the path along which we have to make our way after leaving Spaventa; his is the honour of having led us to the place where it begins.

Notes

1. Page numbers in Gentile's *Opere*, Vol. xxvii, pp. 3–39 are given in square brackets.

2. *Sophist*, 253c; *Republic*, vii, 532.

3. [*De Interpretatione*, 16a10–17a6; *De Anima* 430a27–b3.] Cf. Plato, *Sophist*, 259e: δια γὰρ τὴν ἀλλήλων τῶν εἰδῶν συμπλοκὴν ὁ λόγος γέγονεν ἡμῖν ['For it is due to the interweaving of ideas with each other that we have got the power of discourse'. Square brackets indicate notes by the translator.]

4. *Ethica* Part II, def. 3 explanation: 'Conceptus actionem mentis exprimere videtur', unlike *perceptio*, which 'indicare videtur, mentem ab obiecto pati'.

5. [An echo of Pindar, *Pythian Odes*, viii, 95.]

6. [The 'varietà' of the 1954 edition seems preferable to the 'vanità' of the 1923 edition (Principato, Messina). See Gentile's posthumous *History of Philosophy*, *Opere*, p. 222.]

7. [*Republic*, vii, 514a–517c.]

8. [*Fragments*, 12, 30, 53, 91. Gentile actually makes Heraclitus call war the 'madre' of all things, but this is just the conventional Italian rendering.]

9. [According to Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, ii. 80–224, the primary motions of the atoms are the perpendicular fall and the slight swerve that leads to collisions and rebounds. But this was an Epicurean 'correction' of the original view of Leucippus and Democritus that the motion of the atoms was completely *random*.]

10. [This second query given in the edition of 1923 is omitted from the edition of 1954.]

11. See my essay, 'The act of thinking as pure act' [*Opere*, xxvii, pp. 183–95].

12. *Wissenschaft der Logik*,² Vol. I, p. 104 [Miller, p. 106].

13. *ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 72–4 [Miller, pp. 82–3.]

14. *ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 87 [Miller, p. 93.]

15. *ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 102–3 [Miller, pp. 105–6.]

16. [Becoming is a mercurial restlessness which subsides into a motionless result.] *ibid.*, p. 103 [Miller, p. 106]. Cf. *Encyclopaedia*, §89. The result needs to

be pegged, says Hegel; but does not *pegging* a result mean going outside the category as transcendental thought?

17. *Encyclopaedia*, §88.

18. *Meinung*, which Croce translates by 'intenzione', illuminating shrewdly, but somewhat arbitrarily, the obscurity of this *Meinung* of Hegel's, which it would perhaps be better to leave in its original vagueness.

19. *Wissenschaft der Logik*², Vol. I, p. 85 [Miller, p. 92].

20. *Logische Untersuchungen*, Berlin, 1840, Vol. I, pp. 25ff.

21. *Wissenschaft der Logik*², Vol. I, pp. 85–6 [Miller, p. 92].

22. [The 1954 edition wrongly has 'opposizione' for the 'esposizione' (= *Darstellung*) of the 1923 edition.]

23. Some parts of this history – so far as concerns the Italian critics and interpreters of Hegel – are included in my *Origins of Contemporary Philosophy in Italy*, Vol. III, Part 1, pp. 209–11, 367–71; and Part 2, pp. 162ff. [*Opere*, xxxiii, pp. 201–3, 354–7; and xxxiv, pp. 167ff.].

24. *Logik und Metaphysik* (Halle, 1850–1).

25. *Wissenschaft der logischen Idee* (2 vols., Königsberg, 1858–9). The first contains the *Logik und Ideenlehre*, the second the *Metaphysik*.

26. *Grundzüge des Systems der Philosophie als einer Encyclopädie*, 1848; in the first part he expounded logic both as objective logic (or doctrine of the categories) and as subjective logic (or doctrine of the concept).

27. Whose work I have not managed to see and know only through Fischer and Spaventa.

28. The following is Erdmann's exposition in his *Grundriss der Logik und Metaphysik*³ (Halle, 1848), §30: 'But if being is not marked by any differentiation, then there is nothing to be distinguished in it, and it is therefore utter absence of content, the absolute vacuum, which is conceived as quite as indeterminate and pure as being was previously. More closely regarded, therefore, being proves to be *pure negation*. A negation which we call *nothing*, non-being, or, perhaps better, *no*. Hence the expression "being is being and nothing *more*" contains unwittingly the correct and exact relation.'

29. *Logik und Metaphysik* (Stuttgart, 1852), §29.

30. Published in the *Atti della R. Accademia delle scienze morali e politiche di Napoli*, Vol. I (1864), pp. 123–85; reprinted in *Scritti filosofici*, ed. G. Gentile (Naples, Morano, 1900), pp. 185ff. It was reviewed by C. L. Michelet in *Gedanke*, V, 1864, pp. 114–17.

31. *Logica e Metafisica*, new edition with the addition of unpublished matter, ed. G. Gentile (Bari, Laterza, 1911), pp. 166–7.

32. *System der Logik und Metaphysik*² (Heidelberg, 1865) (since reprinted by the *Kantgesellschaft*): see §77.

33. *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*, Bd VIII; *Hegels Leben, Werke und Lehre* (Heidelberg, 1901), pp. 448–9.

34. On Tari, see my *Origins*, Vol. III, Part 2, pp. 28–37 [*Opere*, xxxiv, pp. 27–36].

35. *Scritti filosofici*, p. 199.

36. [I.e. the power that *alters* with us in a double sense.]

37. *Scritti filosofici*, pp. 215–17.

38. Compare *Principii di etica*, 1867, ed. G. Gentile, pp. 45–57.

39. B. Croce, *Critica*, X (1912), p. 309.

40. *Scritti filosofici*, p. 235–6.

41. Compare 'The act of thinking as pure act' [*Opere*, xxvii, pp. 183–95].

42. *Logica e metafisica*, p. 176.

43. Published posthumously in 1884; reprinted in *Scritti filosofici*, pp. 253–76.

44. Kindly made available to me by my friend the late Professor Sebastiano Maturi.

45. See in this connection my essay on Vera in *The Origins of Contemporary Philosophy in Italy*, Vol. III, Part 1, p. 346 [*Opere*, xxxiii, p. 261].

[46. Gentile reprinted the whole 'Unpublished fragment of Bertrando Spaventa' as an appendix to this essay. It is not here translated. See note 50.]

47. *Italian Philosophy in its Relations with the Philosophy of Europe* (1861), ed. G. Gentile (Bari, Laterza, 1908), p. 238.

48. *Op cit.*, p. 237.

49. 'It is my war-horse', he told a pupil of his: D. Jaja, *Sentire e pensare* (Naples, 1886), p. 1. [The expression *caval di battaglia* signifies metaphorically a performer's favourite part or piece.]

50. [Reprinted in Gentile, *Opere*, xxvii, pp. 40–65. The reference is to p. 65. Apropos of Hegel's appeal to opinion, Spaventa allows that if you ask somebody whether being or non-being are the same or different, he will reply forcefully that they are different. 'But is there any difference between being and nothing in our set-up, the ones you call the indeterminate? No, a thousand times, no; but only between those that are the objects of *opinion*, not between those that are the objects of *thought*. When you say: the difference is mere opinion, you do not see that you are dragging the *difference* in from outside. It is a difference that *does not belong*, and therefore is not an object of *thought*. And, I repeat, you are altering the set-up; you are not *thinking* even of being and non-being as the indeterminate. You are going outside Logic.']

51. [On Spaventa's way of thinking, 'the *difference* of being and nothing follows immediately from the very *identity*; since *non-being* is the act of being', *Opere complete*, xxvii, p. 64.]

Extract from *What is Living and What is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel* (1907)

Benedetto Croce

The connection of distincts and the false application of the dialectic form

How then has it come about that this system of philosophical thought, established with such logical depth, so rich in irresistible truth, so harmonious with and sympathetic towards concreteness, passion, fancy and history, has appeared to some thinkers and has been condemned by them as abstract, intellectualistic, full of arbitrariness and artifice, at variance with history, nature and poetry, in a word as the opposite of what it means to be? How can we explain the violent reaction against it, a reaction which seemed successful and definitive, and which it would be superficial (and little in the spirit of Hegel) to explain as entirely due to accidental motives, to lack of intelligence and to ignorance? On the other hand, how has it come about that this philosophical system has been invoked in support of the most different schools, such as materialism and theism, the very schools which Hegel intended to combat and to surpass? And how comes it too (if I may be permitted a personal instance, which perhaps does not relate exclusively to a personal case) that I, who am writing now with such a feeling of complete agreement this interpretation of and commentary on the Hegelian doctrine of the synthesis of opposites, should for several years of my mental life have felt a marked repugnance to the system of Hegel, especially as it is presented in the *Encyclopaedia*, with its tripartite division into Logic, Philosophy of Nature and Philosophy of Spirit, both as I understood it myself, and as I saw it expounded and advocated by Hegelians? And how comes it that even now, in rereading those works, I sometimes feel the old Adam, the old repugnance, arising within me? The inmost reason for all this must be sought. Now that we have indicated the healthy part of the system, we must point out the diseased part as well. After having shown what is *living* in the system

of Hegel, we must show also what is *dead* in it, the unburied bones, which hinder the very life of the living.

And we must not be too easily contented with a concession which has often been offered by strictly orthodox Hegelians – the recognition that Hegel could and did err in many of his statements of historical fact and of the natural and mathematical sciences, owing to the limitations both of the general state of knowledge of his time and of his own individual culture. Such Hegelians admit that all this part of the system must be re-examined and corrected, or even reconstructed from top to bottom, in the light of the progress of those special branches of study. The implication would be that it is only as historian and as naturalist that Hegel is deficient and out of date; as philosopher, as one who never founds his truth upon empirical data, he remains intact. His adversaries rightly remain unsatisfied with this concession, because the source of the dissatisfaction with the system of Hegel is not the quantity or the quality of the erudition which it contains (most admirable, despite its deficiencies and occasional archaisms), but precisely the philosophy. I have declined above to consider the influence of Hegel's thought upon historical studies as something separate from and independent of the principles of his system. Here, for the same reason, I cannot consent to consider the cause of his errors as independent of his philosophical principles. Those of his errors which have seemed historical and naturalistic are at bottom, or for the most part, philosophical errors, because they spring from his thought, from his method of conceiving history and natural science. Hegel is all of a piece; and it is to his credit that his errors cannot in general be explained as an accidental series of inconsequent irrelevancies.

The problem, then, is to seek out what might be the philosophical error or errors (or the fundamental error, and the others derived from it) which fused and combined in Hegel's thought with his immortal discovery, and thereby to understand the reaction against the Hegelian system, in so far as this reaction was not the usual obstructionism which all original truths encounter, but rested on evidently rational grounds. And since, according to what has already been said, the logic of philosophy was the special field of Hegel's mental activity, it is to be presumed that there we shall find the origin of the error, which would in that case be an error of logical theory.

It is therefore a just feeling of the direction in which this search should be conducted that has led anti-Hegelian criticism in general to neglect the particular and incidental details of the system, and to set itself to exhibit the error of the principle of the synthesis of opposites itself, on the ground, either that the two terms are not opposed, or that their synthesis is not logical, or that it destroys the principle of identity and contradiction, or on similar grounds. Yet we have seen that substantially none of these objections is well founded, and every other objection that

can be thought out satisfactorily proves to be equally unfounded: for that principle resists and will resist every examination and assault. The error of Hegel, then, is to be sought in his logic; but, as it seems to me, in another part of his logic.

In the rapid summary of the various Hegelian doctrines given at the beginning of this work, when it was important to go directly to the problem of the dialectic, only passing reference was made to the doctrine of the relation of *distincts*, or, as it would be expressed in naturalistic logic, to the theory of classification. That doctrine must now be considered more closely, because it is my firm conviction that in it is hidden the logical error committed by Hegel, so weighty in its consequences.

The philosophical concept, the concrete universal or the Idea, is the synthesis of distincts, just as it is the synthesis of opposites. We talk, for example, of spirit, or of spiritual activity in general; but we also talk continually of the particular forms of this spiritual activity. And while we consider all of these particular forms essential to complete spiritual achievement (so that deficiency in any one of them offends us and impels us to find a remedy, and its total or partial absence shocks us as something monstrous and absurd), we are also jealous and vigilant that no one of them should be confused with any other. Therefore we reprove him who judges art by moral criteria, or morality by artistic criteria, or truth by utilitarian criteria, and so on. Even if we were to forget the distinction, a glance at life would remind us of it: for life shows the spheres of economic, of scientific and of moral activity almost externally distinct, and makes the same man appear a specialist, now as poet, now as man of business, now as statesman, now as philosopher. And philosophy itself should remind us of the distinction, for it is not capable of expression without specialization into aesthetic, logic, ethic, and the like: all of them philosophy, yet each of them a philosophy distinct from the others.

These distincts, of which we have given examples and which are at once unity and distinction, constitute a connection or a rhythm, which the ordinary theory of classification is not capable of explaining. Hegel saw this very clearly; and he never ceased to combat the importation of empirical classification into philosophy, the conception of concepts as subordinate and co-ordinate. In ordinary classification one concept is taken as foundation; then another concept is introduced, extraneous to the first, and this is assumed as the basis of division, like the knife with which one cuts a cake (the first concept) into so many little pieces, which remain separate one from another. With such procedure, and with such a result, farewell to the unity of the universal. Reality breaks up into a number of elements, external and indifferent to one another: philosophy, the thinking of unity, is rendered impossible.

Hegel's abhorrence of this method of classification caused him to reject prior to Herbart (incorrectly credited with the first statement of this

criticism) the conception of faculties of the soul, to which Kant still adhered; and to reject (as he writes in 1802¹) that psychology which represents the spirit as a 'bag full of faculties'. 'The feeling that we have of the living unity of the spirit', he repeats in the *Encyclopaedia* (§379, and cf. §445), and in all his other books, in the most various forms and on the most various occasions, 'is itself opposed to the breaking up of the spirit into different forces, faculties, or activities, whatever they be, conceived as independent of one another.' And be it observed that Hegel, always *sollicitus servandi unitatem spiritus*, was able to develop this criticism with far greater right and with far greater consistency than Herbart, who never succeeded in making his refutation of faculties of the soul agree with his atomistic metaphysic, and with his ethic and aesthetic, which consisted of catalogues of ideas, separated from one another and without relation to each other. But nevertheless, in the opinion of the writers of psychological manuals and histories of philosophy, Herbart passes for a revolutionary in his view of the spirit, and Hegel almost as a reactionary, who should have preserved the old scholastic divisions!

If 'distinct' concepts cannot be posited in separation but must be unified in their distinction, the logical theory of these distincts will not be the theory of classification, but that of *implication*. The concept will not be cut in pieces by an external force, but will divide itself by a movement internal to itself, and throughout these acts of self-distinction it will maintain its own identity; the distincts will not be in a relation of mutual indifference, but of lower and higher degree. The classification of reality must be replaced by the conception of degrees of spirit, or in general of reality: the *classificatory* scheme by the scheme of *degrees*.

And the thought of Hegel set out on this path, the only one that conformed to the principle with which he started, the concrete universal. The theory of degrees permeates all his works, although it nowhere receives full and explicitly reasoned statement. Here, too, he had his precursors, whom we should investigate; and here, too, the philosopher most nearly akin to him is perhaps Vico. For Vico never distinguished spirit, languages, governments, rights, customs, religions, otherwise than as a series of degrees: spirit as *sense*, *imagination* and *mind*; languages as *divine mental language*, *heroic language* and language for *articulate speech*; governments as *theocratic*, *aristocratic* and *democratic*; rights as *divine right*, established by the gods, *heroic right*, established by force, and *human right*, established by fully developed human reason; and so on. For this reason, Vico too conceived philosophy, not as a cabinet with separate pigeon-holes, but as '*eternal ideal history*, upon which particular histories appear in time'. But if Hegel did not know the work of Vico, he had other incentives towards the solution which he sought. The very sensualism of the eighteenth century, especially the doctrine of Condillac, notwithstanding the poverty of its categories and of its presuppositions,

seemed to him valuable, in so far as it contained the attempt to render comprehensible the variety of forms in the unity of spirit, by demonstrating their genesis. His criticism of Kant for having simply enumerated the faculties and the categories in his tables was supplemented by his appreciation of Fichte, for having affirmed the necessity of the 'deduction' of the categories. But his true and proper precursor was Schelling's system of identity, with the method of potentiality, for which reality developed itself as a series of *powers* or degrees. 'The subject-object' (thus did Schelling himself recall his juvenile conception in his vindication of himself against Hegel),

in virtue of its own nature, objectifies itself, but from every objectification it returns victorious and shows itself on every occasion at a higher power of subjectivity, until, when it has exhausted every one of its virtualities, it appears as subject triumphing over all.¹²

What does the theory of degrees mean? What are its terms, and what is their relation? What difference does it present to the terms and relation of the theory of opposites? In the theory of degrees, every concept – and let the concept be *a* – is both distinct from and united to the concept *b*, which is superior to it in degree; hence (beginning the exposition of the relation) if *a* be posited without *b*, *b* cannot be posited without *a*. Again, taking as an example the relation of two concepts, a case which I have studied at length elsewhere,³ that of art and philosophy (or of poetry and prose, of language and logic, of intuition and thought, and so on), we see how an insoluble puzzle and enigma for empirical and classificatory logic resolves itself naturally in speculative logic, thanks to the doctrine of degrees. It is not possible to posit art and philosophy as two distinct and co-ordinate species of a genus (which might be, for example, the cognitive form) to which both are subordinate, so that the presence of the one excludes the other, as in the case of co-ordinate members. There is proof of this in the many distinctions between poetry and prose, which have been given, and continue to be given, all of them most vain, since they are founded upon arbitrary characteristics. But the knot is unravelled when we think of the relation as one of distinction and union together: poetry can exist without prose (although it does not exclude it), but prose can never exist without poetry; art does not include philosophy, but philosophy directly includes art. And in fact, no philosophy ever exists save in words, images, metaphors, forms of speech, symbols, which are its artistic side, a side so real and indispensable that, were it wanting, philosophy itself would be wanting. An unexpressed philosophy is not conceivable: man thinks in speech. The same thing can be proved by adducing other dyads of philosophic concepts, the transition from *rights* to *morality*, or from the *perceptive* consciousness to the *legislative* con-

sciousness. Thus the real, which is one, is divided in itself, grows on itself, to use the words of Aristotle, or, to use those of Vico, passes through its ideal history – and in the last stage, which gathers up in itself all the preceding, attains to itself, in its complete or perfect form.

If now we pass from the relation of the stages *a* and *b* (in the example chosen, art and philosophy) and pass to the relation of the opposites in the synthesis, *a*, *β*, *γ* (employing the example of being, not-being and becoming), we shall be able to perceive the logical difference between the two relations. *a* and *b* are two concepts, the second of which would be abstract and arbitrary without the first, but which, in its connection with the first, is as real and concrete as it is. On the other hand, *a* and *β*, taken out of relation to *γ*, are not two concepts but two abstractions; the only concrete concept is *γ*, becoming. If we apply arithmetical symbols to the two connections, we have in the first a dyad, in the second a unity, or, if we prefer it, a triad, which is triunity. If we wish to give the name (objective) dialectic both to the synthesis of opposites and to the connection of the different degrees, we must not lose sight of the fact that the one dialectic has a different process from that of the other. If we wish to apply to both connections the Hegelian terms 'moments' and 'overcoming', which is at once 'suppressing' and 'maintaining', we must note that these terms bear different meanings in the two cases. Indeed, in the theory of degrees, both the moments are concrete, as has been noted; in the synthesis of opposites both are abstract, pure being and not-being. In the nexus of degrees *a* is overcome in *b*, that is to say, as independent it is suppressed and preserved as dependent: spirit in passing from art to philosophy negates art and at the same time maintains it as the expressive form of philosophy. In the nexus of opposites, considered objectively, (*α* and *β*), in their mutual distinction, are both of them suppressed and maintained; but only metaphorically, because they never exist as *α* and *β* distinct from one another.

These are profound differences, which do not permit that both modes of connection should be treated in the same manner. The *true* is not in the same relation to the *false* as it is to the *good*; nor is the *beautiful* to the *ugly* in the same relation as it is to *philosophic truth*. Life without death and death without life are two opposed falsities, whose truth is life, which is a nexus of life and death, of itself and of its opposite. But truth without goodness and goodness without truth are not two falsities, which are annulled in a third term: they are false conceptions, which resolve themselves in a connection of degrees, for which truth and goodness are at once distinct and united: goodness without truth is impossible, since it is impossible to will the good without thinking it; truth without goodness is possible only in the sense in which that proposition coincides with the philosophic thesis of the priority of the theoretic over the practi-

cal spirit, with the theorems of the autonomy of art and the autonomy of science.

Without doubt, *a*, being a concrete concept, that is presenting the concrete concept in one of its particularizations, is also a synthesis of affirmation and negation, of being and not-being. Thus, to return again to the same example, artistic fancy lives as fancy; and therefore it is concrete, it is activity which affirms itself against passivity, beauty which affirms itself against ugliness. And being and not-being become particularized, consequently, as truth and falsity, beauty and ugliness, goodness and wickedness, and so on. But this contest does not take place *for one degree in relation to another*; for those degrees, considered in their distinction, are the concept of the spirit in its determinations, and not the universal concept of spirit considered in its dialectic of synthesis of opposites. The organism is the struggle of life against death; but the members of the organism are not therefore at strife with one another, hand against foot, or eye against hand. Spirit is development, history, and therefore both being and not-being, becoming; but spirit *sub specie aeterni*, which philosophy considers, is *eternal ideal history*, which is not in time. It is the series of the eternal forms of that coming into being and passing away which, as Hegel said, itself never comes into being and never passes away. This is an essential point: if it is neglected, we fall into the equivocation to which Lotze (alluding perhaps to a passage of the *Parmenides*) referred when he wrote that because the servant takes care of his master's boots, it does not follow that the concept of servant takes care of the boots of the concept of master!

When we say that the spirit is not satisfied with art, and is driven by its dissatisfaction to elevate itself to philosophy, we speak correctly; only we must not allow ourselves to be misled by a metaphor. The spirit, which is no longer satisfied with artistic contemplation, is no longer the artistic spirit; it is already beyond that level – it is the incipient philosophic spirit. And in the same way the spirit which feels itself dissatisfied with the universality of philosophy and thirsts for intuition and for life is no longer the philosophical but the aesthetic spirit, a single and determinate aesthetic spirit which begins to fall in love again with some determinate vision and intuition. In the second, as in the first case, the antithesis does not arise in the bosom of the degree that has been surpassed. As philosophy does not contradict itself as philosophy, so art does not contradict itself as art; and everyone knows the complete satisfaction, the profound and untroubled pleasure, which springs from the enjoyment of the work of art. The individual spirit passes from art to philosophy and passes again from philosophy to art, in the same way that it passes from one form of art to another, or from one problem of philosophy to another: that is not through contradictions intrinsic to each of these forms in distinction from the others, but through the contradiction that is inherent

in the real, which is becoming. And the universal spirit passes from *a* to *b* and from *b* to *a* through no other necessity than that of its own eternal nature, which is to be both art and philosophy, theory and praxis, or however otherwise it may determine itself. So true is this that if this ideal transition were caused by a contradiction which revealed itself as intrinsic to any determinate degree, it would no longer be possible to return to that degree, which had been recognized as self-contradictory: to return to it would be a degeneration or a retrogression. And who would ever dare to consider it a retrogression to return from philosophy to aesthetic contemplation? Who could ever judge to be contradictory or erroneous either of the essential forms of the human spirit? That transition of ideal history is not a transition, or rather it is an *eternal transition*, which, from this viewpoint of eternity, is a *being*.

Hegel did not make this most important distinction, which I have endeavoured to make clear, between the theory of opposites and the theory of distincts. He *conceived the connection of these degrees dialectically, in the manner of the dialectic of opposites*; and he applied to this connection the triadic form, which is proper to the synthesis of opposites. The theory of distincts and the theory of opposites became for him one and the same. And it was almost inevitable that this should be so, owing to the peculiar psychological condition in which the discoverer of a new aspect of the real finds himself (in this case, the synthesis of opposites). He is so tyrannized over by his own discovery, so inebriated with the new wine of that truth, as to see it everywhere before him, and to be led to conceive everything according to the new formula. It was also almost inevitable that this should be so, owing to the relations, close as they are subtle, which unite the theory of distincts to that of opposites, and both to the theory of the concrete universal or idea. There are also in the theory of degrees, as in that of opposites, various moments that are overcome, that is are negated, and at the same time maintained: in the former too, as in the latter, there is unity in diversity. To discern the differences between the two theories was reserved for a later historical period, when the new wine was matured and settled.

We can find proofs of the lack of this distinction and of the confusion caused by its absence at every step in the system of Hegel, in which the relation of distinct concepts is always presented as a relation of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Thus we find in the anthropology: natural soul, thesis; sensitive soul, antithesis; real soul, synthesis. In the psychology: theoretic spirit, thesis; practical spirit, antithesis; free spirit, synthesis; and again: intuition, thesis; representation, antithesis; ethicality, synthesis; or again, in this last: the family, thesis; civil society, antithesis; the state, synthesis. In the sphere of absolute spirit: art is thesis; religion, antithesis; philosophy, synthesis; or in that of subjective logic: concept is thesis; judgment, antithesis; syllogism, synthesis; and in the logic of the idea:

life is thesis; knowledge, antithesis; absolute idea, synthesis. And so on. This is the *first case of that abuse of the triadic form* which has offended and still offends so seriously all who approach the system of Hegel, and has been justly described as an abuse. For who could ever persuade himself that religion is the not-being of art, and that art and religion are two abstractions which possess truth only in philosophy, the synthesis of both; or that the practical spirit is the negation of the theoretical, that representation is the negation of intuition, civil society the negation of the family, and morality the negation of rights; and that all these concepts are unthinkable outside their synthesis – free spirit, thought, the state, ethnicity – in the same way as being and not-being, which are true only in becoming? Certainly Hegel was not always faithful to the triadic form (and indeed he declared in one of his juvenile essays that *quadratum est lex naturae, triangulum mentis*); and often, in developing particular cases, he minimized the error of the triadic form; but no such particular determination can suppress the principle of division assumed as foundation. On other occasions the triadic form seems almost to be an imaginative mode of expressing thoughts which of themselves do not attain to their substantial truth. But to accept such an interpretation would be tantamount to discrediting that form in its logical value, i.e. in precisely the value which it must most fully maintain in the dialectic or synthesis of opposites. On the other hand, to defend the affirmations of Hegel with extrinsic arguments would be to proceed like an advocate who wishes to win with ingenuity rather than with truth; or like a swindler who puts forward money of good alloy, in order to pass false money in the confusion.

The error is not such as can be corrected incidentally, nor is it an error of diction: it is an essential error, which however small it may seem in the summary formula in which it has been given – the confusion between the theory of distincts and the theory of opposites – yet produces the gravest results; that is to say, from it arises, if I am not mistaken, all that is philosophically erroneous in the system of Hegel. This we must now examine in detail.

Notes

1. *Verhältnis d. Skeptizismus zur Philosophie* (in *Werke*, xvi. 130).
2. In the Preface to the *Fragments of Cousin*.
3. In my *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic*.

The historicism of Hegel and the new historicism (1942)

Benedetto Croce

Hegel's merits as the thinker who imparted an historical character to philosophy and a vigorous impulse to the historical studies which attained such a pre-eminence of honour in the nineteenth century are outstanding. On the other hand he and his school have been regarded with great suspicion by the historians, who have charged them with forced, arbitrary and unilateral proceedings. The two judgments upon Hegel, seemingly contradictory, are both justified, and can both be embraced by a single mind, if it is ready to ponder, sift and conciliate them.

The deep historical significance of the Hegelian philosophy lies in the dialectic which sweeps away all the abstract distinctions and oppositions of classificatory logic, which, when transported out of conversational language or the language of the natural sciences (or of naturalistically designed textbooks of the moral sciences) into the field of historical thought, turn out to be specially fitted to prevent an understanding and to involve the mind in insoluble enigmas. Under the application of such discriminations as those between Being and Appearance, Substance and Accident, Ideal and Real, Rational and Irrational, Positive and Negative, Good and Evil, Something and Nothing, and so forth, history either has the air of being abandoned to the caprices of the irrational because the rational is not of this world, or the air of a mixture of rationality and irrationality, a succession of sporadic facts, resistant in its very nature to the operations of thought. It is the dialectic that re-establishes concreteness in place of abstractness. For on the one hand it reunites what the abstract or scientific intellect divided for its own ends, and on the other hand it turns the Negative into the inmost spring of Becoming, of progress, which proceeds by the steps of thesis, antithesis, and new thesis, or synthesis. Thereby it deepens and defines in a previously unknown manner that concept of development which is the central concept of history.

This is a logical principle or 'discovery' to be placed alongside of the other great discovery or principle enunciated a century earlier by Vico, when, in opposition to Descartes and the mathematicizing and anti-historical early rationalism of his times, he pronounced that one knows only that which one does: accordingly men, in that they make their own history, have of it an intrinsic and real knowledge, different from the knowledge of the mathematician, who knows only those fictions which he himself makes for his own use. Hegel was not informed about Vico's principle, and showed no cognizance of it, though it is really the necessary premise for viewing historical development as susceptible of understanding.

If we subject to inquiry those rigorous rules of method which Hegel enunciates in the course of his historical writings, we shall see that they all lead back to the dialectical concept of method. Thus in his history of philosophy he rejects the method practised by Brucker and the rest, of addressing to the philosophers of the past questions such as they could not possibly answer, being not fixed and eternal questions, but questions conditioned by the circumstances of later and more complex ages with previously unknown spiritual needs. Similarly he refused to try and translate, explain or justify popular religious beliefs in terms of the concepts of free thought,¹ or to introduce into the interpretation of history 'influences' or even 'reciprocal action', while he insisted, on the contrary, on the unity of the spirit which is entirely present in each of the various forms of any one age.² Then again he insistently recalled that there are no 'dead philosophies' but only dead philosophers, dead as mortal men, and that whatever has once been thought is eternal and not a transient something, and that events are not only committed to the sanctuary of memory but are present and alive as when they were brought about, and constitute the very essence of the spirit, and so on.³ We might say that for him dialectic was not simply theory but something which he lived out in the unity of his mental and practical life, showing a steady interest in contemporary happenings which is rare among the major as well as among the common or garden philosophers, who usually shelter themselves with *fuge rumores* for their motto. Hence the depth and truthfulness, the ever challenging and thought-stimulating character of his interpretations of philosophical, religious, artistic, political and moral history.

There is, however, another aspect of Hegel's work which justifies the dissatisfaction and disapproval of the historians. Hegel was incapable of working out to its conclusion his dialectical principle. Had he done so, along rigorously critical lines, it must needs have brought him to the position of an absolute immanentism, an absolute humanism and historicism. But Hegel was strongly committed both to the patterns of ancient and especially of the Neoplatonic philosophy, and also to those religious and theological traditions which Lutheranism and Protestantism

(supported, in this field, throughout the seventeenth century by the lingering scholastic and metaphysical schools of Spain)⁴ had preserved and cultivated in the German universities. These patterns and traditions had been more than a match for the rationalism of the Enlightenment, incapable of deep critical thought and for that matter itself positing a sort of intellectualistic transcendence in the enlightening and supra-historical *Raison*.⁵ The forces of the new dialectic were too young and immature to get the better of that transcendence and theological inclination. They sufficed to liberate Hegel from what he called 'the metaphysic of the intellect', but not from the metaphysic of *Vernunft*, 'Idea', or 'mind', which, under whichever term it was known, was equally conceived in the transcendence manner.

That this should have happened with Hegel can astonish and outrage only those who have never meditated upon the arduous course of his thought and his slow advance along it. Vico, also, after conceiving the life of the spirit as 'an ideal eternal history, basis of the particular histories which run their course in time', went some way towards erecting this principle into a transcendent principle, as a result of which, instead of finding it operative in its entirety in every single one of the acts of men (which are always acts of an eternal ideal history wholly coincident with themselves), he envisaged a history of empirically severed epochs, assumed by him to correspond with the single moments of the ideal process. Vico thus impaired the reality of history by depriving it of the individual character of its development and so of its growth and advancement out of itself, that is of its perpetual 'progress' (the word came into use in the eighteenth century).⁶ In consequence Vico, who as a European, an Italian and a Neapolitan, was strongly alive to and aware of the value of poetry, the critical function of thought, the energy which creates political states, the ethical conscience which by its operations civilizes them, appeared nevertheless, on one side of his work, to cut down his vision of reality to match the oriental idea of the circle and of the 'courses and recourses', uttering a pessimistic *nil sub sole novum*, and appeared on the other hand to subject the drama of history to a law of natural immutability, corresponding to those of Copernican or Newtonian physico-mathematical science, of which the final upshot was once again pessimism.

Hegel's shortcoming was similar, but far more serious and extensive. Instead of handling the dialectical principle, which it is his glory to have introduced into logic and history, with critical caution, he abused it. In the first place he rationalized, and did not really liquidate, the mythical conception of a God, creator of nature and of man in his image and likeness. Next he depicted the Idea as it 'resolves' to issue forth from itself and to become other than itself in the world of nature, and then returns to itself in the human world, of man and his history. With such

imaginative and arbitrary proceedings Hegel dialecticized all the distinctions of philosophy, treating them as abstract theses requiring to be raised to the level of truth by synthesis with their opposites. He went further and similarly dialecticized (in other words he retained and raised to the level of truth, but by a summary conferment upon them of a meaning and an office for which they were unsuited) the concepts of the natural and physical sciences, and the merely classificatory discriminations used in the moral sciences, nay, even the actions and events of history.⁷ Very naturally, then, the historians, the naturalists, and the philosophers themselves rose in protest against the usurpations of the dialectic, all the more so when in the Hegelian school this method, which had never prevented Hegel himself from radiating truth on every hand, became thoroughly mechanical and dull.

No doubt Hegel, too, affirmed the unity and identity of philosophy with historiography, and it is irrelevant here that he explicitly affirmed this unity and identity only in regard to the history of philosophy. For since in Hegel's view thought is the force which produces all reality,⁸ the formula which he used in fact identified all history with the history of thought, or philosophy, and the abstract relation which he posits between 'history of philosophy' and 'philosophy of history' is perfectly coherent. But his way of arriving at this identification was to refine the empirically distinguished epochs of history into philosophical categories and to coarsen the categories of philosophy into historical epochs, whereby philosophy and the history of philosophy came to coincide, and philosophy traversed, in its temporal development through the centuries, its logical or ideal cycle. In the same way political history came to coincide with the various forms of liberty and with their logical succession (liberty of the 'one', the 'several', and the 'all', having as their correlatives the three great epochs of oriental, Graeco-Roman, and Christian-Germanic history) and had thus the additional character of a theory of liberty in its logical and educational progressions. To be noticed here is Hegel's conversion into philosophic categories of the wholly empirical concept of 'peoples', 'nations' and 'races', and of the *Völkerseelen*, national souls, which were made to incarnate – in political history – the successive grades of liberty, in such wise that each of the peoples having played its part finally retired from the stage of history. All this, however, is not an identification of philosophy with history, but a sterile attempt to resolve history into an abstractly conceived philosophy, having for result a corruption and maiming on both sides. Through the illicit interchange of roles the philosophic categories lose their ideal quality, and the intuitions lose their corporeality. Hence arises in the (Hegelian) history of philosophy the impossible concept of a thought which acquires its categories one by one in the course of time,⁹ whereas thought, like the spirit as a whole, is always entire in every one of its acts, and in its self-distinction, which

is not a self-division but is the eternal Becoming and life of the universe. And there arises analogously in political history the impossible concept of a liberty which instead of being the principle of all moral development, at work in everything that is done, must instead construct itself stage by stage, passing through the successive phases of being a liberty for one, for some, and finally for all.

The consequence of this faulty proceeding is that the history of philosophy, after attaining in the highest category the full understanding of itself as Idea, becomes fixed in a definitive philosophy, so that in fact (no matter how much Hegel and his school may seek, discordantly, to deny it) thought must needs come to an end and die, since it can only not die by developing perpetually, while the history of humanity, having similarly reached its peak in the Germanic branch of mankind, superior in its political institutions to the peoples which did not profit by the Lutheran Reformation, and now enjoying full consciousness of liberty, must needs come to a pause for want of anything more to do. For there was not even a provision, as in Vico's arrangement, for the recommencing of the cycle, nor again is there any evidence that Hegel, like Tommaso Campanella, was under the incubus of 'an instant ending to all human things', an imminent termination of the world process. Thus the historians' protestations against Hegel's doctrine were justified in reason and were very often, thanks to the inadequate, inexact and one-sided versions which he gave of this or that human achievement or action, justified also in detail. But over and above this, the human mind itself raised a more general protest against his implicit affirmation that philosophy and art would come to an end, and still more against his explicit theory that art and poetry had now concluded the century-old task of manifesting the Idea in sensible form, handing it over now to the definitive performer of the function, Philosophy, after which it remained only for art and poetry to die.¹⁰

Not only did Hegel's very bold attempt to resolve history into abstract philosophy and the historical epochs into categories fail in its object, but Hegel himself bore witness to the failure. First history remained for him entangled in the outwardness of time (time and space are for Hegel general determinations of the 'Idea' outside itself – that is they belong to 'nature'). Now time and space are not external but are internal in the spirit itself, constructions of the spirit. Second he was unable to maintain a strict speculative significance for his great notion that the real is the rational and the rational the real, but had to allow the accidental and irrational to linger on alongside of the rational, and had to excogitate the sophism of a true rational in conflict with an untrue rational. Third he was obliged to have recourse to the same sort of sophism when facing the spectacle of the irregularity of the world of nature, which he crudely explained by the 'impotence of nature to actuate the Idea'!

Kant (as I have elsewhere commented), when he equated thought with the act of judging, and defined judgment as the unity of category and intuition, unconsciously established the principle of the identification of philosophy and history, and put an end to all speculation on the abstract concept, so that, forerunning and indeed outrunning Robespierre, he 'decapitated' (the witticism is Heine's and our Carducci put it into verse) not a mere king, but 'God', that is the transcendent God. Hegel, however, failed to draw the inescapable conclusion deriving from Kant's reformation of the theory of judgment, and rebuilt a philosophy of the mind or Idea, reintroducing, against his better inspiration, a dualism between spirit and nature, mediated by the transcendent Idea issuing forth from and turning back into itself. Consciously or otherwise, Kant was altogether quit of religion, and entirely taken up with *Kritik*. Hegel remained within the ambit of the religions, as shown not so much by his proclamation of Christianity as 'absolute religion' or his flirtations with Protestantism as by his offering an equivalent of mythology and of transcendent religion in his system.

The new Historicism accepts, extends, deepens and applies Vico's principle that men know only that which they do (consequently all that they know is their own history which they made themselves), and Hegel's principle of a dialectical development proceeding by conversation, on the one hand, and on the other hand by the replacing of that which is surpassed. But not less than these two principles the new Historicism grasps firmly and extends and deepens and fecundates and integrates with them also the Kantian theory of judgment. But it rejects, first and foremost, the so-called 'philosophy of history', regarding it as at best a mythological or 'symbolical' foreshadowing of Historicism's own doctrine. It denies along with all other philosophical *a priori*s the *a priori* knowledge of history in any of its parts. It admits no historical proposition purporting to elucidate the 'document', that is life as it has been experienced, such life being itself, in truth the crowning or rather the fundamental document of all documents. Historians truly deserving the name cannot protest against this method in the way that was justified in the case of the Fichtian, Schellingian, and Hegelian teachings, which subjected sober reality to the transcendence of the pure and abstract category. But neither have the men of philological scholarship any right to put up an opposition, unless, indeed, forsaking the purity of their calling as collectors and verifiers of documents, they give themselves airs, as often happens, and offer their services as inferior historians, imagining that they possess a whole when they only possess abstracted bits and pieces of non-organic material on which they endeavour by the labours of the imagination to confer an apparent unity. The historians have all the less a motive for protest in that the philosophers themselves, meeting them halfway, have noted and recognized the historical character of their

own philosophizing, renouncing their naive and illusory belief in supra-historical definitions, which – if there is any truth in them at all – are found on a thorough inspection to be historically determined forms of thought.

There is a charge which was not without some reason levelled against the old Historicism, and is now levelled against the new. It is the complaint of the moral conscience that the accomplished fact was invested as it were with the dignity and office of moral law, or, popularly expressed, that success, regardless of its quality, was hallowed and came to take the place of the intimate moral criterion. And undoubtedly this theoretical error, this blunted moral sensibility, was indeed present or apparent in the philosophical writings in question, either as a reflection from the conservative or reactionary inclinations of their authors, or for some other reason which led to a worship of strength in itself, the heavy hand, or violence, as the highest power in the real world. Yet even when, quite differently, such philosophers (as can be recorded to the honour of the Italian Hegelians) were in no way servile towards existing might, or worshippers of success, or lovers of tyranny, but warm and sincere advocates and promoters of all the works of freedom and education, a suspicion continued to hover around them on account of their Historicism. The logical upshot of their doctrine, even if not explicitly or complacently formulated, was felt to be the compression of the liberty of men under an imaginary necessity born of a confusion of identity between the respect due to truth (whence the recognition of what has happened just as it did happen as being part of our world and of ourselves) and the dignity of the moral conscience (which is forever creating new facts and so renewing the world and ourselves). That this, however undesired, should have been the upshot was inevitable, because a thought which had interrupted the continuity of life at a certain point and found now no way of reattachment and of resumed progression resorted to the expedient of restoring the Transcendent if not under one set of appearances, then under another: as, for instance, the domination either of a God or else of an Idea standing fixed and immobile above the world and enforcing one or another of the particular and transient forms of history. Now human activity requires to be enlightened by a thought both critical and objective and fully and religiously observant of the past, which it has to explain as it really happened and not as it may oscillate in the view of an impassioned imagination. And it has no less need of the moral conscience, which is the ever-returning inspiration of its free practical action, or in other words, of each one's ever new and concrete personal duty. It needs both these wings and cannot sacrifice one for the sake of the other without the supposed beneficiary also becoming weakened and exhausted.

There is no such thing as a 'factual situation' fixed once for all, for the moral conscience. The function of this last is to restore that which

appeared to be definitive to an undefinitive condition – for no definitiveness is more than a moment in eternal process and progress, just as no truth is definitive in an absolute sense since the new conditions of life which are perpetually being created, and the criticism aroused by these, dissolve the definitiveness when they exert pressure to complete it, to enrich it and to replace it with a new and once more definitive-indefinitive truth. The reluctance ordinarily shown in accepting these obvious truths and real propositions is what should properly be considered surprising, and the strange accompanying fear which is really a frightened shrinking from life's own perpetual outstripping of itself and from the unpausing progression of thought beyond every point of arrival. But our wonderment turns to a smile when we recall that it is ever the habit of the plebeian, and of the plebeian always lurking in each one of us, to dream of the end of troubles, of peace in a definitive and delightful leisure – it is a dream which never ceases to recur. The philosophers themselves, being human, have yielded to this dream, seeking or imagining that they have discovered the perfect republic, the truth of truths, the surpassing of the world in a world above.

And finally, there was some justification or pretext for suspicions that the old Hegelian or Idealistic Historicism converted man, the individual, into a passive or indifferent instrument of the Idea, or of Providence, weaving the plot of history behind his back and using him for their own ends. But when our present-day 'Existentialists', having apparently only just discovered the existence of the driving force and the travail of vitality, proclaim their great astonishment and absorbed interest (for my part as a constant reader of drama and lyric poetry I have never been unaware of it: indeed I accorded it great prominence in my theoretical exposition of the philosophy of the spirit) and proceed to repeat criticism of the above-mentioned sort at the expense of the new Historicism, then one cannot repress a certain irritation. For by this time it can surely be expected that all should recognize that there is no dividing line having on one side of it the spirit, on the other side man, on one side a providence, on the other a puppet which providence moves by a string, on one side a universal and on the other an individual, but there is only the spirit, providence, the universal, which is nothing else but the life by which we live, the logic of this life, the concreteness of universal in individuality, and therefore there is no Fate weighing upon men unless they choose to give the name Fate to their own liberty.

Notes

1. *System und Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. Hoffmeister (Leipzig, Meiner, 1940), pp. 62–73.

2. *ibid.*, pp. 141–8.

3. *ibid.*, pp. 70–1.

4. On the recent researches on this forgotten strand of German philosophy see Eschweiler, *Die Philosophie der spanischen Spätscholastik auf den deutschen Universitäten des 17. Jahrh.* (Münster, 1928); Lewalter, *Spanisch-jesuitische und deutsch-lutherische Metaphysik des 17. Jahrh., ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der iberisch-deutsche Kulturbeziehungen und zur Vorgeschichte des deutschen Idealismus* (Hamburg, 1935); M. Wundt, *Die Schulmetaphysik des 17. Jahrh.* (Tübingen, 1939) and see my reviews in *Critica*, xxix, 63–5, xxxvi, 66–7, xxxviii, 166–7 (reprinted in *Conversazioni critiche*, IV, 26–9, and *Pagine sparse*, ed. Ricciardi, iii, 327–9).

5. In addition to my remarks in *Teoria e storia della storiografia*, 4th edn, pp. 224–7, read the acute essay of Carl C. Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1932).

6. This is the critical point of Vico on the ‘courses and recourses’ expressed in my *Filosofia di G. B. Vico*.

7. This criticism I elaborated particularly in my essay of the year 1906, *Ciò che è vivo e ciò che è morto della filosofia di Hegel*.

8. ‘Das Denken ist das Innerste von Allem, das ἡγεμονιχόν.’ ‘Der konkrete Gedanke, näher ausgedrückt, ist der Begriff, und noch weiter bestimmt ist die Idee. Die Idee ist der Begriff insofern er sich realisiert,’ (*System und Geschichte*, pp. 97–9).

9. In the *Encyclopaedia*, par. 384, Hegel writes: ‘The Absolute is the spirit: this is the highest definition of the Absolute. To discover this definition, to understand its meaning and content has been as it were the absolute aim of every culture and every philosophy, the goal of the efforts of every religion and every science: this impulse alone explains the history of the world.’ [Croce here quotes his own translation from the Introduction to the *Philosophy of the Spirit*. Translator.]

10. On this point, which I brought out particularly in a discussion with Dr Bosanquet, see my essay included in *Ultimi Saggi*, pp. 147–60.

An unknown page from the last months of the life of Hegel (1948)

Benedetto Croce

Professor Hegel looked up from his large study table covered with books and papers and asked the maidservant what it was. He had heard a knock on the front door just before she came in. 'There's a foreign gentleman asking if he can come in and have a word. His name is on this card.' The name written was: 'Francesco Sanseverino of Naples'. Professor Hegel at once recalled the young Neapolitan who had visited him in Berlin about seven years earlier, in the spring of 1824, with a letter of introduction from an Austrian general and diplomatist then in Italy.

Sanseverino had first been in Germany in 1812-13 as an officer in one of the Neapolitan regiments which took part in Napoleon's invasion of Russia and in the subsequent armed clashes on German soil. The intelligent and studious youth had been struck and attracted by the vigorous and original intellectual life which he found around him, and, back in Naples, had continued to obtain and read German books and to meditate a return to Germany in order to get in closer touch with its new culture and philosophy. When in 1819 he was able to visit Berlin again, his arrival coincided with the rise to fame of Hegel. He heard echoes of the solemn inaugural lecture with which his course had opened the previous year, naming the German people as 'God's chosen people in philosophy'. Sanseverino had noticed the convergence, in Hegel, of a drive towards philosophical greatness and leadership with a surge of confidence in the new might of the Prussian state after the war of liberation. In 1824, before setting out on his third visit, he had carefully read and deeply pondered all of Hegel's published works, the *Phenomenology*, the bulky *Logic*, the concise *Encyclopaedia*, and lastly the *Philosophy of Right*, besides some of the scattered review articles. But he was still in the stage of learning and digesting what he learned; more eager to hear than to talk. He paid a respectful visit to Hegel, telling him of the ardour and zeal with which he was following his work, and of the hope which he

cherished of finding *himself* in that pursuit. The Professor had been attracted by the simplicity and straightforwardness of these remarks, as well as by a touch of Neapolitan irony, that viewing of oneself as if from the outside, with understanding but not without a smile. Sanseverino attended Hegel's lectures in the University, met and talked with some of his leading pupils – Marheineke, Gans, Henning, Hotho and Michelet, the faithful band of his disciples at that time, but refrained from entering into argument with them either. He told Hegel that he hoped to come back and see him once again a year or two later, and got encouragement to do so. And when he got home, to Naples, he pursued his researches and meditations, studying the greatly enlarged and improved *Encyclopaedia* of 1827. He was not too much concerned at not being able to follow those lectures of Hegel which the pupils were subsequently to publish. Useful as these would be as expositions (especially the lectures on the history of philosophy and aesthetics), the arguments – in principle and general form – were already covered *in nuce* in the published works.

It was towards the end of the summer of 1831 that Sanseverino returned once more to Germany. He was told that Professor Hegel had just come back from the country where had taken his family when the cholera epidemic, affecting Germany as well as other countries, was reaching its height. He was received by Hegel with the politeness natural in a well-bred man untouched by the ostentatious boorishness then fashionable in Germany. He told Hegel the course of his studies up to date, avoiding mention, incidentally, of his participation in the Neapolitan constitutional revolution of 1820–1, for he was aware of Hegel's political attitude and of his opinion that such revolutions and convulsions were a 'weakness of the Latin peoples'. Only when the Professor asked him what were the conclusions which he had reached in the course of those studies did he come to the point of his visit.

Sanseverino asked to be allowed to recount in some detail the reasons of his particular affection for Prof. Hegel's philosophy, that is for his philosophical attitude. This, it seemed to him, had its root in far richer and more modern strivings of the intellect than those even of the revolutionary Kant. Kant, Sanseverino went on, was attracted to the physico-mathematical sciences, which seemed to him to be the authentic field of human knowledge. He had indeed taken a direct hand in them. But he neglected, nay, almost ignored the history of mankind, and even his knowledge of the history of philosophy showed large gaps and misunderstandings. He had little feeling for poetry (his favourite poets were Horace and Pope) and no experience at all of the other arts, save perhaps of music, called by him 'the indiscreet art' because one could be forced to hear it against one's will. True, by a miracle of critical acumen, hearing the new talk that was going on concerning problems of taste, he succeeded in uttering some profound although negative truths about beauty; but he

stopped short of identifying beauty with art. For he conceived art to be a combined play of intellect and imagination, not far differently from the tradition which sees in art an imaginous envelope to render attractive some teaching that it is desired to dispense. Want of historical sense weakened his political theories, and want of poetic sense weakened his religious conceptions; his ethic was austere, but abstract and rather inhuman. Revolutionary though Kant was, his culture was still that of the eighteenth century. He was one of the Romantics in his *a priori* synthesis, his conception of the beautiful, his postulates of the practical, but he had the rationalistic formation of the Classics. Now your philosophy, Professor, is quite different, tending not towards the natural and mathematical sciences but towards poetry – of which it is the complement – towards religion – in which it brings clarity – and towards history, where it discovers its concreteness and actuality. It has therefore the sort of range of interests which best corresponds to the nature of philosophy and the moral requirements of the modern age.

Sanseverino went on: there is another aspect in your philosophy which I find pleasing. In spite of its didactic severity and even aridity, I feel in it the presence of a passionate being, a man who has lived and loved. I cannot imagine Kant being able to write those pages of your *Philosophy of Right* which define and celebrate the married estate in which the natural link of the flesh loses its importance in favour of a spiritual and substantial link, indissoluble, superior to the accidents of the passions and the pleasures. I won't repeat bachelor Kant's definition of marriage, which was, for him, just a contract. Nor can I imagine Kant delighting like yourself, Professor, in the depictions of the penitent Magdalen by Italian painters, and giving a kind, indulgent interpretation of the life and feelings of the object of the portrait on the grounds (as though, almost, you yourself had yielded to the allurements of the frail creature) that a beauty so full of feeling could not have loved but nobly and deeply, and that her fault, if any, must be the touching fault of an excessive grief and repentance. And then, your mocking disdain for the ascetic devotees of personal moral perfection, tormenting themselves with scruples as they anxiously pursue it. I recall the words: 'What use to the world is your laboured and studied perfection, with the touch of egotism and vanity in all those worryings? What the world wants and is waiting for is effective work. You have sinned. Very well, then, don't dwell on it overmuch, but redeem yourselves in work.' And then I like the impatience that sometimes peeps from behind the philosopher, as when treating of Newton as the symbolic figure of the mechanical conception of reality, and of the discovery which he made thanks to an apple falling from a tree, you could not refrain from the caustic comment that apples have always been of ill omen for mankind, for Eve's apple cost man paradise, the apple of Paris caused the Trojan war, and now there is Newton's

apple. And then there was your remark about your admirable colleague Schleiermacher's reduction of religion to a 'feeling of dependency' – 'The dog, then, must be the best of all Christians.'

Hegel smiled at these recollections of his satirical quips, especially those which recalled to him his life and loves and the natural son he had begotten, and the little occasions for jealousy that he gave sometimes with his courting of the ladies of the opera to his still young and much loved and revered wife.

And now, continued Sanseverino, having proclaimed what you will perhaps allow me to call my feelings of sympathy for your philosophical work and its outward features, my next task must be to indicate what seem to me to be the great truths which you have introduced into philosophy, truths which, as the reserves and revulsions of your present adversaries already show, may indeed be misrepresented, denied, or rated cheaply, but can never be plucked out by the roots – they will always flower anew. But I must ask leave once again to take a liberty. It cannot be for me to pronounce these truths in your own manner and words, or with the ordered derivations, consequences, relations as set forth by you. It would be better for me to say nothing than to attempt it. Of course, reading the works of a poet I may and should sink my attention in his words, his sounds and rhythms, attaining a unity of soul with him, inactive in all else save my sharing of his whole activity as a poet. But a philosophical opinion has to be encountered with thought; one thought has to welcome the other; and this can only be done in an embrace of envelopment; only in the process of critical elaboration can understanding be afforded.

Hegel here interposed: I have in fact become rather impatient of the many repeaters of my formulas. Some time ago a Hungarian took to visiting me and demonstrating his mastery of my philosophy by reciting page upon page of my works learned by memory. I had to tell him that this was heroic and wonderful, but no proof of speculative capacity. The excellent Signor Cousin is another who affords me small comfort. He is much interested in my philosophy, but with an 'Ah! que c'est difficile tout ça', burying his head in his hands when one of my pupils tries to give him the required explanations, he renounces all attempts to understand it, as being something too high and distant for him. He wrote to me that he was waiting impatiently for the new edition of the *Encyclopaedia* '[pour] en attraper quelque chose . . . ajuster à sa taille quelques lambeaux de mes grandes pensées'. But even my own pupils somewhat annoy me with their excessive faithfulness, tending to render static what I feel in myself to be still dynamic. I am rather afraid of the sort of approval in which trust in the master, and, by reflection, one-sidedness of fanaticism of the scholars, counts for so much. I too desire and have hitherto waited in vain to see my thought rendered back to me through the agency

of another mind understanding and fathoming it – someone who, as you say, understands it critically and will put it into other words. So I wait with much interest to know what these truths of mine will be which you will set forth in your own way.

Well then, they are these: first and foremost, the way you make a clean sweep of the absurd envisagement of philosophical concepts as detached from facts, and, thus detached, as being thinkable in themselves; and then equally you dismiss the similarly absurd envisagement of facts as being susceptible of affirmation by themselves without the presence of concepts. The concept, or Idea, or Universal Concrete, or whatever we call it, is the union of the universal and the individual judgment in action. The new Concept of the philosophical concept springs from Kant's *a priori* synthesis; but it is you who have emancipated this from the limitation of Kant's special reference to physico-mathematical science, and given it its full significance as the law of knowledge, or more properly speaking of the Spirit, in all its forms. And you have envisaged true judgment not as an empirical classification or proposition but as categorical judgment, valuation. Now once we have grasped the concept of the universal concrete, we can dismiss the distinction between rational and factual truths, finding every rational truth to be at the same time factual. And, something which is of the greatest importance, we may do away with the separation of, nay with the very distinction between, history and philosophy. Every historical proposition contains a philosophical affirmation and every philosophical proposition an historical affirmation. History is redeemed from the age-long contempt in which it has been held as a mere collection of facts, and philosophy from the vacuity and uselessness with which it has been and is so often charged. However, if on the one hand you implicitly heal that breach and proclaim that identification, with a change from customary ways of thought which is of the highest intellectual importance, on the other hand, by no less important originality on your part, two mental forms which have been improperly harnessed together, and in a forced unity have alternately taken on each other's shape, fall asunder – philosophy and science. For, as you point out, the concepts of the sciences are products of the intellect, not of the reason; they are arbitrary and not necessary; they obey ends which are not philosophical but practical. Consequently philosophy and science can now enjoy complete autonomy, for the problems of each are no concern of the other. Your third great truth I take to be the definite resolution of the dualism of positive and negative, good and evil, light and darkness, Ormuzd and Ariman, by dint of your demonstration that the negation stands, not over against, but inside the affirmation, evil not over against but inside good, nothingness not over against being but in being, so that true being is becoming. The moment of negativity is not a reality apart, but is reality itself when discerned in the process of its becoming, in the

effort of detachment from and outranging of one form and entry into possession of another. The form which is to be surpassed, and which more or less successfully resists that change, in so doing takes on the air of negativity, evil, error, ugliness, death. From this dialectic is derived the solemn aphorism 'the real is rational and the rational is real', meaning that history and the past have a sacred or divine character, as having been willed by God. The past is the platform on which we build or the starting point from which we go forward, not to be denied or condemned without therewith denying and condemning the entire enchainment of history and reality. But the irresistible truth of the aphorism seems sometimes to founder under the impact of a present and overwhelming evil that has to be encountered. For that reason it behoves us to add that although historical thought annuls the dualism between the rational and the real, the practical and moral conscience must continually restore and uphold it. For *Sein* and *Sollen*, the terms not of theoretical truth but of practice and morality, require it. This surely will set at rest all those who are haunted by some kind of fear that morality is being chased out of the world, evil being put on a level with good, brute fact being installed in the rightful place of moral judgment and action.

Here Hegel remarked: on the whole I recognize my own thought in this interpretation which you are giving of it. But I have never asserted, and I could not, I think, bring myself to assert, the identity of philosophy with history. Nor have I asserted that the character of the natural sciences is practical, or that the relation of the rational to the real is one thing in the reality of history and another thing in the sphere of practice and morality. And then, in your exposition, I miss a great deal of additional matter which I regard as essential in my system.

For that very reason – answered the Neapolitan – I felt bound to start by telling you that my summary exposition of your thought could only be of so much as I myself had found true or had verified through the workings of my own mind, including inferences never drawn by yourself and excluding other inferences and elaborations of yours which I myself cannot make out to be true. May I ask you to tolerate a further observation, attributing it not to arrogance but solely to the sense that genius has, as a foil to its divine side, also its human side? I want to say that when I pass from the great and fruitful principles to the detailed elaboration of them in your system, it often seems to me as though some hostile factor had operated to deflect those principles from their logical consequences, constraining you to accept what was intimately extraneous and contradictory; and what was worse, to apply the dialectic where it was inapplicable, and worst of all, thereby to debase the dialectic in a superficial and mechanical employment. How that has happened I cannot say. Truth is its own justification and rational exposition, but error cannot explain its own origin in non-truth without unmasking and confessing its own erring

character. The critic or the self-criticizing author may well define the consistency of an error, but not exactly how the error came into the world. As to this, there can be only more or less abstract and psychological speculation, apart from such generic pronouncements as that all error has its origin elsewhere than in pure thought, in some impulse proceeding from a basis of interest of one kind or another. Thus I might opine that in your case the error sprang from allowing yourself to be dominated by traditional religious conceptions or traditional scholastic teachings, classifications and methods. But I could not in this way explain the inexplicable – how it came about that your powerful genius, in rebelling successfully against so many secular convictions and preconceptions, nevertheless in other cases gave in to them, failing to complete the task of confutation. But truth to say there can be no giving of reasons for a failure to do something. An error is in the last analysis a concept that has not been realized, but taken for granted, not thought out, and thus, not brought into existence.

Well, then, said Hegel, let us forget about the search for reasons of error. I agree that such a search must be indefinite – perhaps the problem itself is non-existent. Tell me rather what it is in my system that you find inexplicable. Bring in a formal bill of charges against me – I shall gladly listen to it as an excellent antidote not only to the insipid criticisms which I see in various reviews and pamphlets, but also to the excessive praises and endorsements of my own milieu. I see you are not one of those numerous all too doughty disputants who wear one out with useless and empty contradiction, but a self-possessed and thoughtful inquirer who contradicts only in the course of and for the purposes of the inquiry.

Then, as you kindly allow it, I will indeed propound what you call a Bill of Charges. That will make for clearness in the enunciation of criticisms, by a brisk procedure which will serve your ends (for your time is precious) as well as my own. It will be, in any case, a briskness of literary form and not a token of disrespect. Well, then, to begin with: whatever gave you the right to think out and to compose a Philosophy of Nature after you had already designated the *Verstand*, or abstract intellect, operating by conventions and arbitrary divisions of the indivisible, as being, when the veils are stripped off, the parent of natural science? For surely this led to the implicit though maybe unspoken conclusion that nature, being 'external', has no reality outside of this natural science with which it is wholly coincident. Accordingly it is impermissible to speak of nature as a form or degree of reality or as 'Otherness in itself' by contraposition to Spirit or Mind. For by a simple logical analysis you had already unmasked the mystery of nature. Notwithstanding which you continued to recognize a reality in nature and a superscience or philosophy thereof called 'Philosophy of Nature' in which you resurrected outworn Aristotelian doctrine and semi-mythical natural philosophies of the Renaissance –

those doctrines for the sake of and against which Galileo constructed a physico-mathematical and experimental science. But you took over the antiquated Philosophy of Nature from your young friend Schelling, worked it up, and appropriated it, forgetting the danger which would lurk in such a gift from the hands of a quick and agile but far from solid thinker whose speculative standing you must have recognized for inferior to your own. Nor would this have mattered nearly so much if this Philosophy of Nature had merely been superadded to your system beyond and on top of natural science like a sort of allegory or fancy to be accepted or rejected at choice, but altogether unlinked with it. But on the contrary you have linked it up with natural science, teaching that the concepts of science 'stretch forward', as you put it, preparing for the ulterior labours of philosophy. Whereas surely those concepts, having their origin in the conventional and the arbitrary, cannot be accepted in philosophy either as a preliminary or as a collateral aid, but have to be swept out of the way as being useless even for building purposes. Thus in practice you have denied that logical theory of the natural sciences which was one of the most important principles, a curative principle, affirmed by yourself. And to make matters worse, there now crops up yet another philosophical science in another field, your 'Philosophy of History', which is the very negation of the unity of philosophy with history. For if these two are one in the unity of the universal concrete, there is no room whatever for a philosophy to render history philosophic (which it is already in and of itself). But with your Philosophy of History you have destroyed this intimate unity of the two. This is in part the fruit of the contempt you have always felt for historians as narrators of facts unconcerned with thought. A more attentive probing would have shown you that as long as a composition is history, by contrast with mere chronicling, thought must enter into it to interpret, qualify and spiritualize the narrative, which will indeed itself be valuable in proportion to the depth and richness and excellence of the thought. There can be no question, then, of breaking into the single and continuous process of the composition in order to find an aperture for insertion of philosophic thought: that thought was already there from the beginning. Really there is no call in this connection for anything more than an instructional hint. The historians should be encouraged to give greater depth and elaboration and precision to the philosophy which already they implicitly employ, and to drop their phobia of philosophizing, while the philosophers should be advised to drop their ignorance and contempt of historical matters, and to devise a philosophy of a higher order than that which they have hitherto practised, that is one more concerned with the knowledge of mankind, of history. The 'Philosophy of History', not unknown to the schools of the Jewish prophets and the Christian theologians, had almost wholly disappeared from Renaissance historiography, but persisted in the theological schools of

the Protestant Universities, whence it reappeared in the works of the post-Kantian thinkers, winning your own authoritative support, although really it is neither history nor philosophy but a betwixt-and-between direction distracting to both of them. Even in the history of philosophy, which you have so meritoriously improved both with your new and original interpretations of the great philosophers whom you could view from the level of an equal genius, and by rising superior to mere erudition, mere advocacy of certain points of view, or mere neutral eclecticism – even in this, as a fruit of the method of philosophy of history, you have introduced the predetermined pattern of a single problem supposedly propounded by philosophy at the beginning, and then, through the ages, ever more thoroughly investigated, until finally it is resolved and therewith the history of philosophy itself comes to an end. The same or something similar happens with the history of art and religion, which thanks to that doctrine of a super-history find themselves wedged into Procrustean beds from which they struggle to free themselves into a freer, more truly philosophical position, exempt from the artificial preconceived pattern of that arbitrary and not genuinely philosophical reduplication.

Hegel listened attentively to the charges, especially that concerning the alleged infiltration of a disturbing element into his courses on the history of philosophy, art, religion, and the state, which were then enjoying great popularity. But he said nothing, and Sanseverino continued: nor am I able to understand why you determined to preserve the triple division of philosophy into a foreground of Logic and Metaphysic and, behind and beyond this, the constructions of Philosophy of Nature and Philosophy of Spirit. This triple scheme was current in the German eighteenth century and had indeed a long history reaching back to the Stoics of antiquity. But if, for the reasons I have set forth, the Philosophy of Nature be ruled out, it would seem to me that, Logic and Philosophy of Spirit being left together in the field, the former will at once be seen as really belonging to and ready to be absorbed in the latter. There can be no solidity about a Philosophy of Spirit in which the logical spirit cannot develop its full play. Indeed, Logic, as you expound it, is itself partly a Philosophy of Spirit, for it embraces the Cognitive Spirit, and the Practical Spirit, together with the Absolute or Dialectical Spirit which is the very nerve of philosophy, and with these also the anti-dialectical, dividing, abstracting ‘intellect’ from the operations of which derive the sciences – all of which shows that your categories are at least partly conceived as Forms of Spirit, although not all of these are covered, while sometimes the categories have the differing character of a catalogue of concepts requiring explanation. I will not now examine in detail your theories of law, politics, art, religion, the Absolute Spirit. But I must remark that the Logic which crowns your system is made, as in the old academic systems, to figure as the organ serving to construct the system, whereas

in a thorough-going Philosophy of Spirit Logic is made – in the act of building itself – to build up the Whole, that is the Entire Concept of Spirit, which, if it does not do, it cannot even build itself. However, it is less the subdivisions in the system, and the placing therein of the various doctrines, which seem to offend against the great logical principles set forth above, than rather, above all, the end towards which it is directed and the method employed. What is aimed at is clearly a history of the world and of its creation, nay, a history of God from before the creation of the world – of God having at his disposal all the categories required for such a creation which when the time came he resolved to effect, issuing forth from himself, making himself *Other*, making himself nature, to emerge then out of that nature which had come to life by his divine breath, into man. And dwelling in man's consciousness and spirit God becomes progressively Subjective or Cognitive Spirit, and thereafter Objective or Practical Spirit, creating the world of law, morality, economy, politics, history. From history God finally returns into himself as Absolute Spirit, first in the two progressive but inadequate essays of art and religion, and lastly as Pure Idea, with entire and definitive satisfaction and self-enjoyment. Such is the framework of your philosophy: it is a history of the cosmos, a history on a set theme moving to a predetermined end along a chain of solutions of diminishing but persistent imperfection – persistent, that is, until the final phase of all, which marks the end of the world and the entry into the kingdom of heaven. But how came it that a philosophy which by developing the concept of the Universal Concrete had liberated mankind from the obsession of nature, showing this to be a construction of the human will (which does not mean something merely wilful, since it well serves certain ends), and had provided in its place the boundless field of history, perpetual becoming, infinite creation of ever new forms, should at the last fall back into a conception of religious transcendence, with the consequence that among the scholars attending your lectures one hears talk of a revived theism and a renewed and illuminating Christian theology?

Professor Hegel had listened motionless to this criticism and denunciation. And now Sanseverino by way of conclusion added this corollary to his argument:

And what, Sir, about the method? Is not the method which is given out as being dialectical and should be such in point of fact destructive of the very idea of dialectic, if a great truth once firmly enunciated could be destroyed? Sir, it was not in your power to destroy it. It is as though you had pierced a mountain wall by which a stream had been confined: now the waters have sprung out into the open and nobody, not even he who revealed and released them, can remove or reverse or abate a flow which has never been in your power, and will, whatever you do, continue on its own course. In other words that current of thought will by its own

strength and in its own right exercise a function of authority and criticism and correction, and if you yourself after having served it in so signal and ever memorable a fashion wish to do so no more, it will seek out and find other, more willing instruments. Or is it inability rather than unwillingness that you now experience? Whichever it be, it is the destiny of the exceptional man to come into the world with a task to perform, knowing, however, that the labours of human thought extend to infinity so that, accomplishing his task, he must resign himself to a transference of the torch into other hands. A great philosopher of Naples whom you have perhaps not yet read or anyway been able to study properly (though his chief work has lately been translated into German), I mean Giambattista Vico, a genius in whom you might see not merely a forerunner but the fulfiller of some gaps left in your own work and one who though a Catholic by profession was less bound by ancient religious conceptions than yourself, wrote a sonnet to celebrate the personal aspect of the end of the composition and revision of his masterpiece: 'My trembling hand now lays the pen aside; the treasure of my thoughts has now been spent.' He felt that after more than once recasting his great book, he had nothing left to accomplish in the world.

But to return to the dialectic. What was its origin? And what became of it? Its origin was, surely, an effort to break those dualisms of positive and negative, truth and error, life and death, good and evil. Its equipment for that purpose lay in the forms, the categories, the values of the Spirit, the true, the beautiful, good, useful, and their contraries. Thus it was in one and the same moment of its activity the distinction between these forms and the passage from one to another, the becoming of them in a transit through the purgatory or hell of nothing (or however else we choose to describe the negative strength-weakness of being), the manner whereby every man at every moment attains the good, the beautiful, the useful, the true, and risks at every moment losing his gain unless, as his spiritual nature requires, he goes on to make a new acquisition. But you, Sir, lost sight of the character of the category and of the distinction which is implicit in the dialectic, so much absorbed were you in the construction of the system: you introduced dialectic where it had no right to be, in the realm of empirical concepts and collective historical process. There, the dialectical operation could only be arbitrary and formal. And this you did because you accepted and held yourself bound by a historical-theological pattern which you strove to display. That pattern, exhibiting a history rendered painful by continual disappointment, never allows the contemplator to utter the summons of Faust to the flying moment – 'Stay, for thou art so fair' – but leaves him for ever face to face with an act which lacks that instant of satisfaction and repose; for being never at unity with itself it harbours an inner contradiction and an inner urge to break the contradiction. Indeed good and evil here lose their contours:

good which is never realized is converted into perpetual evil, perpetual, that is to say, until the final and conclusive moment. Unfortunately it is the world itself that disappears at that moment, the world in which we live and which philosophy should teach us to know and to experience worthily.

Hegel had listened in silent attention, never interrupting Sanseverino. It would have been improper and maladroit, he felt, to enter into an argument with one who had long studied his works and had come frankly to pour out to him, in a communion of mind and of feeling, the conclusions reached in a labour of long duration. These conclusions merited long pondering before it would be fitting to contradict them, demur at them, or even express more or less agreement with them. Nor, for that matter, did Sanseverino expect an answer, well knowing as he did that a serious thinker cannot merely acquiesce in objections of that order: all he can do is weigh and reweigh them in due season and see whether they will afford some new stimulus and direction to his thought as it pursues its own course. Hegel, therefore, after listening in silence, made no philosophical rejoinder, but took his companion's arm and led him to a window of his study. It was a small house on the Kupfergraben, overlooking a stretch of the Spree, close to the town but away from town noises. He pointed out the Montbijou castle just opposite and the adjoining buildings of the great museums. Then with simple cordiality he asked Sanseverino what he meant to do on returning to Naples.

I mean, said the other, to remain your conscientious, grateful and devoted disciple, and never to forget how much I learned from you or how you led me to the upper reaches of thought, freed from the torments of doubt and conflict, in a position to despise the popular and superficial thought of the majority. The task which I shall in particular choose for myself will be to sketch out what I believe to be the logical consequences of your own profound logical discoveries and to give them systematic form – consequences different from those which a German background and tradition have led you to proclaim. The system will be secular, not theological like yours, and simple, flexible, rather than complicated and ponderous. The concept of the Universal Concrete leads, though you would not and will not admit it, to that of the unity of philosophy with history. In that case what really occupied and fills the whole field of knowledge is history. (This is shown by the fact that men desire to know, not ideas for their own sake, but facts, concrete reality, for which ideas are the necessary means but no more than the means.) What, then, will be the form of philosophy? That, surely, of a logic of history, an illustration of the concepts used in the interpretation of history. But that logic or methodology is not to be rated cheaply: it is nothing more or less than a complete Philosophy of the Spirit, a philosophy not to be completely summed up in any book because it is in continual process of

growth, and the motion of history, presenting ever new problems to the mind, ensures that the growth will never stop short. Philosophy is never final; its systems are never static but are ever in motion – indeed they would be better described as provisional systematizations, pauses (so to speak) giving an occasion for taking breath as at the end of a well-rounded paragraph. No problem that has ever been propounded in philosophy is alien to this philosophy of the Spirit. Each and all of them it accepts, and by shaping them into problems of Spirit resolves them: on no other plane can they, if they are genuinely significant problems, be resolved. There is no reason, then, for those respectable gentlemen the Professors of Philosophy to fear that the conception of philosophy as *method* will impoverish philosophy. On the contrary it stands for an enrichment, and calls for rather more alert minds, truth to tell, than those of Professors passing their time over outworn, inconclusive, sterile problems. Within the range of this philosophy of the Spirit the theory of art, aesthetics, must be worked out anew, liberating it from clinging remnants of the old-fashioned rhetoric and poetic, and also from new-fangled psychologism. The aesthetic principle must be understood in its originality, free of either panlogistical or hedonistic contamination. Another need is that there must be instituted a philosophy of vitality or utility, as one may prefer to call it, drawn together out of the theories of politics, economics, the passions, and so on. And there must be a theory of the writing of history, including the critique and history of the theory itself. I could go on mentioning yet further needs. Now Naples, the city upon which the alert minds of South Italy converge, seems ready and suited for such a studious task. Naples has in the past provided almost all the serious philosophers of Italy, and while alive to sublime speculations, is kept on the firm ground of the concrete and historical by an unfailing realism. Herder, Hamann and even Goethe observed or sensed this robust aptitude of Naples for philosophy. A young king has come to the throne; there is a feeling of fresh air, of hope and confidence; private study circles are springing up, voluntary universities, as it were, outside the official University, formed by eager men of study. Foreign literature passes from hand to hand, and reviews of a serious character are appearing with contributions by competent authors. All this draws me back to Naples. Your own philosophy is coming to be known. But I am far from satisfied with the way in which your interpreters have represented your thought as a sort of rationalized religion, and themselves take on the air and accents of a priesthood, and we begin to see the formation of a sort of Hegelian church. We must stop that.

In conversation of this sort the two passed away the evening, and the meeting of their minds developed into a meeting of hearts, because even a clash of thoughts induces a sort of brotherly closeness. So when

Sanseverino took his leave Hegel said to him, with a certain pressingness of affection, that he counted upon his early return to Berlin.

In the ensuing days Hegel never ceased to remeditate that conversation, turning over in his mind his own theories in the light of the objections proffered by the Neapolitan gentleman, debating with himself how to defeat them, coping with doubts that had sometimes before come to him, though never with the present force. Hegel had conceived a philosophy to set forth the grounds of the universe and to set a conclusion to history: it summed up, ordered, and completed the philosophical work of thousands of years, recognizing the contribution rendered by each other system, and justifying all of them with a powerful final act of correction and synthesis. After that, the history of mankind had (in the terms of that philosophy) attained its fullness: the end was linked to the beginning, and none could see whence a further stimulus, a further scope for human labour, should arise. To devise such a philosophy would have seemed a piece of colossal presumption, had it not been the consequence of adopting, as model for the philosophical pattern, the pattern of the traditional religious history of creation, of the laborious process of earthly life and of its ultimate resolution in the life of the other world. And because it had followed that model, its author had shown no sign of overweening self-importance, expectation of present applause and future triumph, in this unlike Tommaso Campanella, proclaimer – not without fanaticism – of the City of the Sun, and of the perfection which the world would therewith attain before Chaos rendered all things to the One. Hegel was far from being intoxicated by his primacy of the past ten years, still fully maintained, among philosophers. Nor did he seem to be satisfied with his achievement, or sure of it. His son Carl had heard him cry out ‘What God doomed me to be a philosopher?’, and his wife had often heard him murmur at his desk ‘I shall never be able to see it through.’ And there is truth in what Thaulow said, that Hegel may have thought that philosophy would only begin after him, certainly not that it would end with him.

But now he could not get out of his mind the clear and incisive objection that he had heard critically expounded by his visitor from abroad with whom, nevertheless, he had felt so much at home. ‘The guiding thought is magnificent, but the system, far from giving it strength, dilutes and weakens and compromises it.’ All the same, his life of thought had, by dint of long study, taken firm shape in that rich system; even could he acquiesce in the criticism now proffered by one who was no adversary but a disinterested, unprejudiced, affectionate reader and disciple, this would have meant . . . It would have meant retracing the course he had followed for over forty years of intense labour, changing the route he had plotted, arriving at a point different from what he had believed to be his point of destination. And this line of direction had

served for the orientation and development of that vast network of teachings which had become, by this time, an aspect of the political mission of Prussia. The thought of having to revise it, if it arose in his mind, overwhelmed and almost frightened him. Where would he have found the required strength, which must be not only intellectual strength but ability to concentrate all the powers of a human being, the so-called physical powers, passion, enthusiasm, dedication, sacrifice, as though nothing else existed in the world, or rather, everything were summed up in that single purpose in the service of which alone he could physically breathe and live? In time past he had known such concentration, above all in the great mental crisis marking the end of his youth. He had known it as pain of hell and divine joy, the voluptuous abandonment to a work of sorrow and love, when he was composing the *Phenomenology* and put the manuscript under his arm while the guns of Jena were still firing. But how should that power have flowed back into his veins, and if it could do so would not this be not merely marvellous but a marvel contrary to nature, monstrous?

So a feeling of humility and renunciation sprang up in him. It seemed now to him that the work he had achieved, its truth and its error, had proceeded not merely from himself but from inspiration and necessity, from the best that there was within him, albeit marked and limited by human weakness. And it seemed best to retain its presentation to the world in this form corresponding to the stage of history which the world had now entered into. It would thus be a lesson, an experiment, and a warning in virtue, on the one hand of its merits and of what there was in it that would be imperishable, and, on the other hand, of its defects, contradictions, insufficiencies, the purging and rectification and revision of which would mean fresh labours, new creative work, another philosopher. In a mood that was in a way both heroic and paternal he conceived of people saying of this successor 'the son is stronger than the father', as Hector desired they should say it some day of his infant son. Then he murmured to himself verses by old Giambattista Vico which Sanseverino had just brought to his notice – verses about the treasure of thought that had long been open to him, but was now closed and would in time be open to another. In humility, now, he was waiting for his 'departure in peace', calmly aware at the same time that he had been 'the Lord's servant', one who on the altar of the Lord could place the work that he had been assigned and allowed to accomplish within divinely set limitations.

All this was true, and the conclusion was just. Nevertheless when a man of thought is told, and made actually to suspect, that error had crept into the thought which had served him as Truth and afforded him a place of repose, how can the prick of remorse be blunted, how can he settle down to live with that error unexamined, uncorrected, unconfuted? How

can he be expected to remain cold and indifferent towards what has been the purpose of his life, that whose immaculate purity he feels it to be his moral duty to procure and to protect?

Unrest and anguish of this sort Hegel could not chase out of his mind so as wholly to recover faith in his life's work, the nourishment he conveyed in the Berlin University lecture hall to his eager audience. Full of mental energy he still was: that very year, touched off by the noise of revolutionary happenings in France, he had given vent to his robust conservative convictions, his suspicion of *hommes de principe* in rebellion *hommes d'état*, in a long article against the English Reform Bill. He was always weaving into his lectures arguments suggested by the latest events. Accordingly it would be impossible for him to obey the wise counsel to let what's done be done – impossible once the thing done had lost for him the certainty that pertains to truth acquired and possessed.

Such was Hegel's state of mind at a moment when the cholera epidemic which had been dying down in Berlin suddenly was wafted back, and suddenly struck down on 14 November 1831 the greatest philosopher of those times. His loving and faithful pupils, undertaking the publication of a dozen volumes of his lectures as a supplement to his written works, stressed, with increasing emphasis, the formal outlines of the system as they had been built up and worked out in the course of university tuition. Little or nothing was then remembered of the prehistory of the system, the history of the travailed formation of Hegel's thought. Only about a century later could this be recaptured by research into unpublished early works. And it was about a century later that the thesis expounded by the Neapolitan scholar to Hegel in the foregoing conversation was pursued. Then, and not till then, was the contrast developed between Hegel the philosopher and Hegel the system-builder. *The Living and the Dead Hegel*, as a book-title had it. It was not just in Naples, where Hegel was much studied in the nineteenth century, retaining disciples even in the age of positivism, but in Italy at large that the Hegelian crisis matured. From that moment, in Italy, the thought of Hegel the philosopher has recovered potency in a systematization altogether different from that chosen by Hegel himself in which consequences are drawn which he never intended, while theories which he had taken over from his forerunners, but which could not be retained, have been entirely reshaped. The very name of the systematization has been changed. 'Absolute Idealism' no longer fitted the case or underlined the fundamental feature of it: and spontaneously the appropriate term came into being – 'Absolute Historicism'. Be that as it may, Hegel now belongs to us: he cannot be all in all to us if only because his belonging to us, our possession of him, can only be of value (as the possession of any thought can only be of value) when it incites new life, new thought.¹

Note

1. Need I remark that this 'Unknown page from the last months of the life of Hegel' is a product of my fancy? This caprice occurred to me during a sleepless night and was put down on paper the morning after. Should the reader ask me in the terms of the classic inquiry of Cardinal Ippolito where I got it from, I should answer that the material came to me by way of my intimate acquaintance with Hegel's thought, and the all too many inner dialogues in which, within my own mind, I was mentally addressing him. For the rest, it cannot be said that an historical basis for the caprice is entirely lacking. Traces of a constructively critical attitude towards Hegel's philosophy were really to be found in nineteenth-century Naples, if not as early as 1830, at any rate towards the middle of the century. They are to be found, however, not among the orthodox Hegelians, not even in the severest and most thoughtful of them, Bertrando Spaventa, but in the fresh and uninhibited mind of one who without formally professing philosophy had a clearer and more genuine vein of it than the professors – Francesco De Sanctis. Among the few references to Hegel that he left here is one to be found in a lecture of 1879 on Zola: 'At the time when Hegel reigned supreme, I expressed my hesitations about his apriorism, his triad, his formulas. But then there are in Hegel two principles which stand at the base of the whole contemporary movement – the principle of becoming, basis of evolution, and the principle of existence, basis of realism. His system has fallen to pieces, but these two principles give Hegel a standing in respect of the future.'

Extract from *The Unhappy Consciousness in the Philosophy of Hegel*¹ (1929)

Jean Wahl

Commentary on a passage from the *Phenomenology of Spirit*

I Introduction

206.² In the pages preceding those that we shall now study, Hegel showed how sense-certainty, perception and understanding fall apart under the strain of the dialectic. He showed us how the play of forces followed the play of perception, transforming the essential into the non-essential and *vice versa*. Perception tried in vain to see qualities without things or things without qualities, and risked exhausting itself in the play of opposition between the immutable and the changeable; ultimately, it left us facing empty generalizations. In the struggle of soliciting and solicited forces, each force constantly changed into the other, and the force and the law presupposed and expressed each other. Then Hegel introduced us into the world of consciousness and that of self-consciousness. In this new world of self-consciousness, Hegel shows us the same struggle of tendencies, the same play of forces.³ Only, the concern is no longer a purely logical dialectic, but now a historical and emotional dialectic. And the division into two extremes which made itself felt, not by the extremes themselves but by the philosopher thinking about them, now seems to be felt by each of the two extremes themselves.⁴ Self-consciousness is doubled into two opposite terms which change sides constantly. To appreciate what this doubling means, and how it occurs, we should take a glance backwards.

The struggle between two consciousnesses, the consciousnesses of the master and the slave,⁵ involves two consciousnesses that exchange their positions from one to the other, just like extremes of perception and then the extremes of understanding. The slave becomes by his labour the master of the master, and more truly so than the master was ever master of the slave. This struggle between two consciousnesses seems to end in

the presence of an Epictetus or a Marcus Aurelius – at the moment of the greatest domination of the ‘master-slave’ category. At this time, under the aegis of the Roman Empire, the master and slave consciousnesses were identified with one another in the consciousnesses of self as inner freedom. Moreover, by recognizing themselves in one another, they gave us in advance the image of the Notion, which is essentially the vision and recognition of self in the other. But, after Stoicism, consciousness passes through scepticism.

Stoicism was the sublimated expression of a certain state of fact: that of the Imperial era, composed of separate personalities, a pure and simple legality, a Pantheon where the statues were all the same and all hollow.⁶ Here, precisely because the dominant element was the universal, an extreme individuality – an individuality that was quite general – came into plain view. But, Stoicism, being allied with Imperial authority at the same time as it destroyed it, remained conceptual.⁷ In effect, the self-consciousness of the Stoic was ‘the freedom of the self’, since it was at one and the same time a doctrine of self-reflection in self and of labour. But it displayed only simple freedom.

Scepticism is the realization of that for which Stoicism was only the concept; it is the real⁸ experience for humanity, both of the contradiction and of the freedom of thought. Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius had the concept of liberty. Sextus Empiricus even lived this liberty. He was conscious of the inessentiality of the *other* – in comparison with the infinity of thought – in a way still unknown to the dogmatic Stoics. Of the two most famous Stoic schools, the first [i.e. the Greeks] is only a preparation for the second [i.e. the Romans].

Whereas self-consciousness remained abstract in Stoicism (in other words, it separated itself on the one hand from a world that it considered both exterior to itself and indifferent to itself because different, and on the other hand, it did not deepen itself enough to see all of its proper power), in scepticism we are going to be watching the movement of this consciousness towards the concrete. Scepticism will realize in itself the negation of the reality that was posed as an ‘Ought’ in Stoicism. In effect, instead of saying that it must not preoccupy itself with the exterior world, the sceptic denies this reality.⁹

But this is not all, for the sceptical consciousness endlessly denies its own self. This self-denial is the result of the consciousness of the play of forces and of the movement of spirit – of the absolute negativity that is thought – which first becomes fully conscious of itself in the unhappy consciousness¹⁰ but is also the driving force of the whole *Phenomenology* – because this book is the story of consciousness’ efforts to forget the distance and separation which it feels within itself. The moment of negation has been implicit in the whole course of this story (as well as being one of those terms that exists only in respect of another, like the

ideas of mediation and time – the three ideas basic to Hegel's dialectic) and now comes forth to stand in the full daylight of consciousness. In the same way, we know also that to enter the lighted temple where the chorus and the court blend together, this whole route is necessary, this whole road of detours from which one sees, successively, the disappearance of sensible evidence, certainty of perception, and the concrete thing of force and understanding. Indeed, this road does not stop; it circles around the unshadowed pillars of the temple where consciousness unveils itself before consciousness – just as it does in the Saïs of the Romantic poet [Novalis] – and is at the same time devotee, priest and god.

Consciousness was the soul of the whole movement that Hegel has followed up to this point, but it is only now that it presents itself truly as the soul and accounts for itself in earlier moments as always being, in truth, in dialogue with itself when it was explaining the nature of things.

The infinity of consciousness is what it calls an absolute unquiet.¹¹ As soon as this infinity has determined one thing, it also perceives that thing as the opposite of what was determined. There is something like a duplicity of consciousness! It is immediately the opposite of that under which it came to be defined. This reversal of consciousness,¹² occurring at the same time as its effort to complete itself, will be the essential process of the *Phenomenology*.

This absolute unquiet redoubles itself continually. It is the 'separation of that which is simple or, equally, that which is opposed'.¹³ Things that are alike push themselves apart, and what pushes itself apart is united: this is the law of opposites that we saw in 'sense-certainty', 'perception', 'force and Understanding' and finally in consciousness itself.¹⁴

Consciousness is a duality; not only does it truly exist for itself only where it exists for another, and is only for another inasmuch as it is recognized to be so, but it is essentially in itself a doubling – an action of dividing itself and seeing itself as separate and then in consequence as one; and redoubling – the action of seeing its self and then seeing itself as two. Consciousness is unceasingly the double and the half of itself; and it is only by taking account of this that it can find its own self adequate to itself.¹⁵

The doubling of consciousness is symbolized by the theme of the master and the slave; its abstract unity by the theme of Stoicism; and the unity of its duality and unity – what one could call its triplicity – is symbolized by what will be the theme of the *Logos*.

But at the same time, one must say that in some ways each of these themes reverses itself: the slave becomes the master of the master; and later, Stoicism deepens itself to become scepticism, and leads to the idea of Christianity.

The two consciousnesses of the master and the slave are reunited, therefore; but they are reunited under a form which is affected by duality

and which, in delivering itself from all external division because there is no externality, finds itself divided in itself. Thus, the idea of division and duality is essential to consciousness. And is this not, in fact, an element of the very notion of spirit? The idea of the unhappy consciousness, just as it appeared in Christianity or in Romanticism, makes us aware of one of the distinct characteristics of spirit. But, neither Christianity proper – under the form of the unhappy consciousness and still muddled in feeling – nor Romanticism will arrive at the true notion. While the duality of the notion is now clear, its unity is still in the shadows. The truly happy consciousness, the spirit that we must reach, will be both one and two. We can even add that it will be one, two and three. In the unhappy consciousness, we are watching the return of the divided consciousness into self, or the reconciliation of consciousness with itself.

At the present, however, this element of unity which caused joy, even spirit, will again cause unhappiness. This unity is incomplete.

In fact, although consciousness was at first doubled in the master and slave consciousness and then united in Stoicism – being at that point a first return of consciousness into itself – this was only a false return, so to speak. The Stoic unification will be followed by an interiorized doubling of consciousness that characterizes the unhappy consciousness.

Scepticism destroyed one of the terms of consciousness, namely, the external world. But at the very moment when it suppressed one term, it made another dualism appear within the remaining term. From this arises the sceptic's unhappiness. Hegel's sceptic therefore is less Montaigne than Pascal; or he is Ecclesiastes, relating the infinite essence of God to the nothingness of creatures and unable to reconcile these two ideas.

The sceptic is conscious of the perpetual change of one thought into another and of its purely particular character. At the same time, he is conscious of what is beyond change since scepticism is the consciousness of negativity, the negation of all content.¹⁶ The sceptic is therefore the successive consciousness of the particularity and generality of all thought. But the sceptic never arrives at the point of thinking these two thoughts together; he goes only from one to the other, without accounting for their proper unity¹⁷ – a unity that is implicit in these thoughts. The movement is also the cause of the sceptic's initial unhappiness. For what is more unhappy than opposition in the womb of the unity which consciousness has at last reached?¹⁸

II The unhappy consciousness in Judaism

207. Because there is now unity of consciousness instead of the duality of the master and the slave, and because consciousness knows of this unity, there is unhappiness. The identical separates itself unceasingly into two opposed things; unceasingly, duality emerges out of unity.

Also, in this unhappy consciousness that was born out of scepticism,

we are watching the perpetual passage of one idea into another; since the opposites are not held together in spirit, we watch a play of forces in the spiritual domain analogous to the play of forces in the material world (and to what will be, much later, a play of hypocrisy in the domain of morality). Every time that consciousness believes it has achieved rest and rolled its stone up to the summit of unity, it is rolled back again towards division and the abyss.

Hence unhappy consciousness really is *the vision of one consciousness in another*, and the unity of these two consciousnesses;¹⁹ but it does not have yet the consciousness of being this unity, for if it did, then just that would make it the happy consciousness.

We had at first two individuals. Then we had a doubled consciousness, which was conscious of its unity only in the sense that it went unceasingly from one of its elements to the one that was opposed to it. Then came a consciousness of one and two. What remains to be seen is how this consciousness of one and two *in itself* becomes a consciousness of one and two *for itself*.

The fundamental traits of the unhappy consciousness are explained therefore by the fact that this consciousness is – but only implicitly – the unique consciousness of a duality; and on that account it is a unity – though not fully conscious – of two contradictory terms. The duality in this consciousness is *for itself*, that is to say that the unhappy consciousness has explicit consciousness of it. But the unity of the duality is not yet *for consciousness*, which means it does not have consciousness of the unity – although it is real – of these two moments of being. So it lacks consciousness of its essence – namely, to be this unity. Consciousness is, so to speak, the announcement of the notion which is (in itself also) the unity of contradictions, but only in the sense that the synagogue of the blindfolded announces the Church. What this synagogue brings together are the terms of a struggle that can never be reconciled. This is a struggle such that when one wants to seize one term, one always ends up seizing the other. This is a prefiguration, however blind, of what the Notion will be.

Here, it is as if the master and the slave were themselves united in one individual spirit, in such a way that if we consider consciousness to be the master, we would discover also its dependence; and if we considered it to be the slave, we would see also its independence. We are between the stage of the material hostility of individuals and the stage of spiritual unity. We are at the stage of spiritual hostility, a recollection of the earlier struggles between men, and yet also a call towards the unity for which this preceding hostility has been necessary.

Consciousness feels more and more the unhappiness of scepticism. The spirit of a Montaigne, as it deepens itself, becomes the spirit of a Pascal. Pascal sees more clearly into himself and feels his unity better – without

being conscious of it. This progress occurs because when consciousness grasps its unity better, it can better feel its break up. At the same time, consciousness now knows²⁰ that Stoicism is not a growth: on the contrary, it is a lessening, a loss of consciousness.

The pages devoted to the unhappy consciousness therefore will contain a description of the doubling of consciousness, and of its effort towards unity, the way that one sees them in religion. Christianity, to which Hegel will make constant though veiled allusions, has been prepared by scepticism in so far as it is a consciousness of human duality, and by Judaism in so far as it is the contradictory consciousness of the absolute duality of man and God and of their unmediated unity.

After the contradictions of scepticism, it was necessary that consciousness should look for its new point of departure elsewhere, in the Orient. Judaism is the conscious grasping of two ideas that were only implicit in scepticism; the Jew says at the same time and on the subject of himself conceived now as the changeable and as the immutable: I am that which is not – I am that which is. 'He brings together two thoughts which scepticism kept separate.' He is the thesis and the antithesis, but in a juxtaposition that stays on the same plane as the opposing concepts, one that does not englobe them in a superior unity and consequently separates them. The result is that the juxtaposition can only ever be temporary, unceasingly splitting itself once more into thesis and antithesis. Having arrived at one term, it returns unceasingly to the other in an oscillation without end. The prophet is, at the same moment that he celebrates God, a prophet of unhappiness; the chants of praise turn into laments. This Jewish consciousness knows its contradiction. It turns out that it is the deepening of scepticism and the unification – still incomplete, of course – of what was separated in it. Judaism is the religion of the sublime, where the essential and the inessential oppose each other most harshly, but see each other as reciprocally necessary.²¹ Judaism poses the same problem involving these terms that was posed in Greece by Stoicism and scepticism, but it does not manage to resolve it.

In view of this, shall we not witness a new relationship of the essential and the inessential, of the particular and the general? Consciousness is aware of its nothingness because it is aware of being at bottom something else than nothingness. But this 'being other than nothingness', this immutability, is immediately transformed before the eyes of consciousness into something that only is in so far as it is particular existence. This unity of the particular and the general which consciousness comes upon in seeing itself as this opposition, this contact of the general and the particular, is religion. Although the feeling of a Pascal is not something which leads us normally to speak properly of religion, it is the same as religion. It is the presence of God in man and of man in God that makes itself felt in consciousness. In feeling itself as nothingness, it feels as

immutable. Pascal at Port-Royal is a reflection – and yet more than a reflection – of Christ in the olive garden [i.e. Gethsemane]. Or rather, both together in different degrees – having natures that are partly different – are the immutable in so far as it is touched by particularity and are particularity touched by the immutable.

208. But for consciousness at the stage of Judaism the two elements that constitute it are not only not the same thing, but are opposites. We shall see that this consciousness knows itself as free, 'immutable and equal to itself', and, at the same time, 'getting entangled and reversing itself' in internal oppositions; it becomes conscious of what will much later be the basis of the thoughts of Pascal: the contradiction that exists between its non-contradiction and its contradictions, between its dignity and its feebleness. Precisely because consciousness seems to have gathered itself together on these particular points that are each of them individuals, it is itself divided again into two parts that seem irreducible. The force of division that is in it, and that we have already noted, can only be surmounted after it has come to light in a thousand ways at the same time as its force of unity. Just as the duality is continually reborn deeper within an always better-sealed unity, so too it is this most acute duality that gives birth to the most authentic unity. Therefore, this movement will be the same as in the case of Stoicism: there will be an essential separation of the essential and the inessential. The fundamental trait of human consciousness, which consists in conceiving of things under the category of master and slave, will find itself again, and we shall be spectators of an incessant natural dichotomy. There will be a being conceived as 'simple and immutable' that will be the essence; and a multiple and changing being that will be without essence. As in Stoicism, these two beings will be 'essences' (if one can employ this word to designate what is inessential) that are strangers to one another. But as the unhappy consciousness is above all a consciousness of duality and contradiction, it will take place, in contrast to Stoicism, as the side of the inessential, because it is conscious of going always from one idea to another and, consequently, of being changeable. On the other hand, we must not forget that consciousness is at the same time the awareness of the immutable; in effect, it is a simple consciousness, and in so far as it is simple, it is immutable; and in so far as it is immutable, it is 'conscious of its immutability as its essence'. Hence, at the same time that consciousness is embroiled in seeing itself in its changes, it liberates itself in seeing its immutability and compels itself to liberate itself from its self by itself. It is conscious of its self only as something changing; the immutable appears to it as something strange; and yet it is its self that is the unchangeable. Consciousness sees clearly that this immutable is its essence, but it separates this essence from its being and places it outside itself.²² So, for the same reason that it sees the immutable as its essence, consciousness sees

its self as separated from the essence; hence, at the moment when it is conscious of the unchangeable as its essence, it opposes itself to this unchangeable and is aware of itself as changing – and so as not being in possession of its true self. It is the consciousness of an anxiety that can conceive of rest only in a beyond.

In its contrary, the contrary only produces itself afresh, and not as reconciled, but simply as contrary. In this situation, we see that the essential and the inessential are, each of them, as essential for consciousness as the other one. Consciousness is conscious of itself in so far as it is inessential, and it is conscious that its essence is the destruction of the inessential. Yet as soon as it comes to consider its essence, consciousness sees itself as opposed to it. At the moment when consciousness considers itself as inessential, it discovers itself as the essence; it goes each time to the side opposed to the one where it began. Consciousness separates itself incessantly from the inessential – or in other words, it separates itself from itself. It is the unhappy consciousness, contradictory, divided in itself.

209. We are so far from rest that we must speak of a struggle where victory is a defeat and 'where the fact of having finally attained one of the contraries' is transformed immediately into the fact of being rejected in the other. To arrive at the consciousness of life, of existence and of action, one must pass through 'the unhappiness that grounds this existence and this action, because consciousness of life is, above all, consciousness of the unhappiness of life'. In becoming conscious of its life, its existence, its action, consciousness becomes aware of its nothingness, and sees its essence in what is opposed. But at the same time as it becomes truly conscious of its nothingness, consciousness becomes aware of its being²³ and enters into the sphere of the immutable. In humiliating itself, consciousness exalts itself, since although, *for itself*, the essence before which it humiliates itself is not itself, that essence is still itself in reality. Job or Ecclesiastes make us see how the soul may perceive its greatness in perceiving its feebleness. This humiliation and this exaltation, in so far as we are conscious of their unity, appear as the moments of pursuit and escape which together constitute the religious spirit.²⁴

III Christianity

210. We are here watching a movement analogous to the logical movement by which Hegel will go from being to non-being, and then, from these two, to a synthesis in becoming. But, this moment concerns not only a synthesis, but a juxtaposition of being and nothingness in the unhappy consciousness, a consciousness that is essentially a consciousness of becoming. We will see also how this movement makes us pass into the immutable, which is itself included in the movement. The immutable is not separated from consciousness; it is precisely this consciousness.

If consciousness is this elevation above itself, if the destiny of consciousness is to surmount itself, then at the same time, its destiny must also be the knowledge that, in surmounting itself, it remains within itself. This elevation above the consciousness of life, above particular existence and above action, is still consciousness. The wisdom of Solomon must be incarnate in a concrete being – in the son of David. Hence the immutable will therefore be a consciousness, that is to say, the immutable will appear with all of consciousness' qualities of weakness and change. One might have believed that the immutable would destroy the particular; but, far from doing that, the particular appears in the immutable itself and the immutable appears in the particular. Christianity is the first conscious grasp of the contact between the immutable and the particular.²⁵ Consciousness becomes aware of itself as particular at the same time as it is aware of itself as general and immediate. We have already seen this game play itself out between the abstract terms 'essential' and 'inessential'. Now, it plays itself out between the more concrete terms of the immutable and the particular. And has not this game been realized in history, and is not Christianity man's consciousness of his generality and his particularity? The immutable, when it enters into consciousness, is, for that very reason, touched by individuality; and individuality, far from being destroyed, only appears anew in the immutable.

Here, as when he spoke earlier of the master and the slave, of Stoicism and of scepticism, Hegel is not at all afraid to find the support and application for his ideas in history, which is, so to speak, his mnemonic rule, because Christianity is for him a preferred example; indeed, more than an example, it is a revelation of the union between the particular and the general – even less so, too, because in his meditations, he often began from his theological studies. At the beginning of this chapter [i.e. the section on the unhappy consciousness], what we are following is the story of the Jewish people from the time of Abraham and Moses – where an immutable God is opposed to the people – until the time when David raised himself up towards the immutable – and the time when the immutable descended into consciousness with Christ. The fact is that Judaism could be defined as an inverted Stoicism, or as a scepticism become theological; and in any case, it definitively opens the way towards higher religious ideas, even though Judaism itself remains in a lower region [i.e. religion rather than philosophy]. This is what allows Abraham, Moses, David and Christ to be taken as symbols of the relation between the general and the particular.²⁶

As Hegel says, in this movement and in this unhappiness, consciousness will experience 'this manifestation of particular existence so far as it is attached to the immutable and of the immutable so far as it is attached to particular existence'. The particular consciousness will feel that its god is itself: God is a particular existence. And, in the same way as Christ –

particular existence in general – was connected to the immutable, so each individual will be connected. What is going to appear as the truth of this movement is the unity of this consciousness that appears to itself as doubled. Christianity gives birth to reflection on the essence of Judaism, just as absolute knowledge gives birth to reflection on Christianity. It is the womb of unhappiness that produces the Christian idea of the unity of the particular and the immutable.

Consciousness is aware of this unity as a given fact. The unity is therefore still imperfect. If each of the two elements is present in the other, it is present only in so far as it is the other. The dominant element in this unity, therefore, at least from our present perspective, is 'the diversity of the two characters'; and consequently, Christianity cannot be given all at once. It has to be prepared by a phase that is a memory of the Jewish or Roman phase, where individuality opposes itself to the immutable essence, and where the immutable is the estranged essence that condemns individuality. The immutable without form is here the element of thought; through that we return to the point of departure – the opposition of master and slave, the essential and non-essential – and the movement continually starts again. Jesus is not recognized as the Messiah, or, if he is, it is in the shape of a temporal event. The Jewish phase must be travelled through again; it must once more be surmounted. In a very general way, this category of the master and the slave is characteristic of all initial thought and remains, for Hegel, 'the elementary given of every situation of this kind'. But it is a given in which one of the terms – the particular consciousness – tends to be suppressed. It is only in the second moment, the moment where this phase is surmounted, that we have Christianity. Here, the immutable gets consciousness to assume and attach itself to particularity. Particularity becomes 'the form of the immutable'. The immutable incarnates itself and exists for the first time in the sensible world. In this way, however, it is something that separates itself from other sensible things²⁷ and has disappeared. Everything that is immutable in consciousness takes on the character of particular existence, even in the eyes of consciousness; and, on the other hand, everything that is particular reveals a general character, but without attaining the true union that we are in search of. All contact with the unformed immutable (the Jewish immutable) is destroyed, and there appears only the contact with the formed immutable (Christ).

It is only in the third moment, thanks to absolute knowledge, that individuality – no longer the form of particularity that is like the immutable, but individuality as such; no longer individuality in general but the individual – finds itself, meets itself, in the womb of the immutable. It is no longer the immutable that incarnates itself, as in the second moment; now, it is the particular that spiritualizes itself. No longer do we have the Incarnation; we have eternal Resurrection. We have the conscious

reconciliation of particularity and generality where particularity finds itself and where we obtain the joyous consciousness, spirit.

Thus, the unhappy consciousness, properly so-called, has its place between the Jewish and Roman²⁸ consciousness on the one hand, and the rational consciousness on the other. But, in one sense, we can say that the Jewish consciousness is already the essential unhappy consciousness.

As for final reconciliation, it occurs in the spirit so far as there is consciousness of both immutability and individuality, i.e. so far as spirit maintains an individualist and Romantic element. What Hegel wants is to maintain individual, Christian and Romantic elements. But at the same time, he seeks to elevate these moments to a religion of the concrete universal – to reach a rationalization of Romanticism and Christianity that is at the same time a christening or romanticizing of the rational. The particular as it has been conceived is no longer the resting particular like the one that is simply touched by the immutable. The particular is profoundly transformed by the immutable, even while conserving its most proper characteristics.

Thus, we have three ways in which particularity is allied with the immutable. We have a hierarchy of immutables – immutables set in motion according to the ways in which consciousness approaches them. After all, the *Phenomenology* cannot study an immutable that is outside consciousness.

The first moment is a moment of pure opposition. In the second moment, the immutable reveals itself to be a sort of particularity. In the third moment, there is a fusion.²⁹ The immutable³⁰ is the first form in which the divine appears; but it is a divinity which is not yet a person – but is truly an 'it' [un *Das*].

The work of Reason in history consists of joining the two extremes – the immutable beyond and the changeable here and now – to make what appears distant to the point of being unknowable into what is near to the point of being identical. Consciousness at first exploded into two fragments that were at opposite poles in the phenomenological sky: on one side, the blinding sun, immobile; on the other, the flying dust that also blinds. When spirit has seen the one in the other, it will possess itself in all its fullness. The 'truth of this movement', its reason for being, is therefore, as Hegel says, the unification of this double consciousness.

Consciousness begins from a formless, essenceless immutable, an immutable as abstract as the abstract thought of Stoicism, although it is more musical.³¹ It can only unify itself with an immutable that is in some sense concrete.

Yet, as we shall see, for consciousness to deny itself immediately, it must be mediated by the idea of the immutable.³²

211. All movement from one to the other is relative, however. Spirit will never move unless the immutable moves. There is no unilateral

movement.³³ Moreover, in order that we may arrive at the immutable in its perfection, in its truth, the movement cannot start from consciousness only. Divine grace is always present, even when consciousness does a free act of sacrifice.³⁴ This is an idea which Hegel apprehended earlier when he said that, between lovers, there is nothing unilateral.³⁵ There is nothing unilateral between them because there is nothing dead. Hegel carries over to the whole universe what he said about love – which was already, at that moment, the universe for Hegel.³⁶ At the same time, Hegel knows that if one does not wish to content oneself with pure subjectivity, one must posit from the beginning a unity of subjectivity and objectivity. In positing the object, the subject presupposes it.³⁷ This is the fundamental affirmation of the phenomenological point of view, where one cannot do without a noumenology – at least as a hypothesis.³⁸

This relativity of movement linked to the very idea of the absolute is all the more essential for Hegel because it is opposed to the static conception of religion, according to which we do not act in any way upon God, but only upon ourselves, and in which God (being immutable and formless) does not act at all. The conception at which Hegel arrives is that of an unceasing action in which God and ourselves each make one into the other.³⁹

Differently stated, the relation of the finite and the infinite cannot be represented in propositions of the following sort: I am finite; God is finite. These determinations – finite, infinite – are only moments of the process. God exists also as a finite, and each of us individually exists also as infinite. God is this movement in itself, and it is for this reason that we say he is the *living* God.⁴⁰ From now on, we must not see the finite as living in itself; we must see it in the act of its suppression; we must see what comes forth from God in its return to God.

A phenomenological theory is analogous to a theory of grace in which we cannot separate what comes from God from what comes from free will.

This presence of the immutable in the individual and of the individual in the immutable Hegel has characterized by using the term 'experienced' [*erfährt*]. The way in which the immutable presents itself is, in effect, an experience of consciousness, an experience that is a test undergone by the divided consciousness in the course of its unhappiness. The revelation of the immutable born of this unhappiness – even the revelation of the whole *Phenomenology* – is the story of this experience. But this is not to say, and Hegel makes this point, that one cannot consider this movement from the point of view of the immutable as well as that of the individual consciousness. This movement is not a unilateral movement – or, rather, the side from which one considers this movement transforms itself immediately into the opposite side – because, as we have seen, the particular consciousness is the immutable consciousness. According to

Hegel, one can also divide this movement from the point of view of the immutable consciousness. Paradoxical as this may appear, the immutable also moves, and, in the first moment, it opposes itself to the particular considered in its entirety (this being Judaism). In the second moment, the immutable incarnates itself so as to be a particular opposed to other particulars (this being Christianity in its first form). In the third moment, the immutable unites itself with the particular (this being Christianity in its completed form). But, according to Hegel, adopting this perspective means going beyond the phenomenological point of view that we have reached at this stage. We must consider only the immutability of consciousness, the immutability affected by a contradiction, not the immutability that is true in and for itself. This last is not yet being produced for us. What uniquely concerns us is knowing that the determinations that we see attached to the immutable also appear 'for consciousness'⁴¹ and appear to it as 'attached to the immutable'.

212. Immutability, we have said, remains sullied by a contradiction.⁴² Just as the particular consciousness, when one studies it in its relations with the immutable, presents itself as divided and as being for itself, so the immutable, on its side, when considered at the moment where it takes the form of a particular, has the double character of being divided and of being for itself. In fact, when it conceives the particular consciousness as other than itself, the immutable conceives itself as other than the particular, and as being for itself. Being for itself all reality (just as consciousness is for itself), the immutable sees that it is divided into two, just as consciousness felt that it was. The monist idealism of the immutable, like the monist idealism of consciousness, results in a conception of duality essential to each side. Jesus felt himself separated from men and separated from God. Consequently, when the immutable took the form of particularity, this was, in the eyes of consciousness, only a fact that happened, a natural event with which it 'found itself' faced. When, in the first moment, consciousness saw itself opposed to the immutable – this was equally the discovery of an external fact. And similarly, when, in the last moment, consciousness is present at the complete reconciliation of individuality and of immutability, this is for it, without a doubt, 'partly a fact for which the immutable was the cause', and which is explained by the nature of the immutable: to be individual. But, from what we have said about this fundamental opposition, the union with the immutable appeared to it as emerging partly from the immutable. In consequence, there remains an opposition in this unity: the unity has its origin and its driving force in each of the two opposed terms. Christianity, the way it was historically given, assumes two factors: the individual and God had each one part of the initiative. For this reason, Christianity remains divided – even at the moment of its union – and is closed in the sphere of facts. There remains in it an element of the opposition that characterized

Judaism. This opposition shows itself precisely in the fact that grace first came essentially from God, and not from God and consciousness together. There remains in Christianity an element of fact, of sensible reality, which is tied to the element of opposition. If the Christian God dies, that is partly because the spirit of Christianity does not live in a complete way: it needs to be enlivened by grace.

Through the fact that the immutable takes form, the moment of the beyond, far from evaporating, 'on the contrary, asserts itself'. In other words, Christianity does not make us arrive at true immanence.⁴³ And that could be foreseen from the fact that we have just stated, i.e. that there remains an opposition in the womb of unity. It is an opposition that will not fail to reproduce itself because, as we saw previously, we are only concerned with the immutable as seen by consciousness, such as it is at this stage of its development. This immutable is sullied by contradiction. Without a doubt, through the Incarnation, the immutable approached consciousness and appeared to itself. On the other hand, the Incarnation had the result of opposing the immutable to the particular consciousness as a *unity* which was particular, sensible, opaque, resistant and harsh. Consequently, the hope of becoming one with the immutable remained only a hope. It was unable to realize itself in the present and could only be an empty form, seen from a distance. There was an element of 'radical contingency', of 'stubborn indifference' that arose precisely from the fact that gave birth to hope – the fact that the immutable entering into existence took a determinate form and was a pure fact.⁴⁴ To be one with what is externally opposed is something impossible. Of necessity, the union was something that vanished – vanished in time and far away in space. But these distancings in time and space are only incomplete mediations. Consciousness can only know a dead Messiah or a dead Christ – and one who died in a distant country; never can it be united with the immutable individual, with the living Christ. And that is precisely because the immutable dressed itself in the character of reality and by so doing submitted to the dialectic of the here and now, just as it was set up in the first chapter of the *Phenomenology*. From the moment that this one came to be, it was more correct to say that he *has* been. In coming to us, in debasing himself right down to us, God is at the same time distanced from us. Consciousness has not yet escaped from the idea of the object. And we are in the presence of a link between sensible immediacy and generality that is still not deep enough. There remains here a 'beyond' separated from the 'down below'. The third stage, where union is realized, is possible only because, instead of having a *here and now*, we shall have a spirit. In the second stage, God was too low for us – after having been too far above us. In the first two cases, God remained distant because the earthly Jerusalem of the old time did

not appear to be any easier to reach than the celestial Jerusalem, nor is the dead God easier to possess than the god that does not know life.

IV The unhappy consciousness in Christianity

213. With Christianity, it is no longer itself as particular that consciousness aims to deny, but the relationship of consciousness with the formless and abstract immutable – what one might call the Law of the God of the Jews. This is in order to allow no relation except the one with the formed immutable⁴⁵ – that is to say, with the Christian God – but without our being able to say that consciousness must stop at this last. We are no longer in the presence of the simple concept of the divided consciousness now, but in that of consciousness in its concrete character. This consciousness no longer has as 'its essence and object' the formless and abstract immutable, neither has it the division into two elements where one tends to suppress the other that characterizes all concepts (the pure and simple concept is in effect a radical division and in its essence, unhappiness), and that, with even better reason, characterizes the concept of the divided consciousness. On the contrary, we see the fusion of the immutable element and the particular element.

214. This fusion will not be reached all at once; it must be interiorized bit by bit, passing from the stage of an external relation between man and his saviour to an identification of the two.

As we have seen previously, it is possible at first to conceive only of an external relationship to the formed immutable, because it is an estranged reality. God is Incarnate, but far off. It is this external relationship that has properly to be changed in such a way that after the God of the Jews, after the Christian God, we have spirit.

What we have before us is the movement by which the inessential consciousness seeks to attain this absolute identity in its second phase – when it finds itself in the presence of a formed beyond. And we shall see that there is a threefold rhythm, that of the being in itself which is the pure consciousness straining towards its beyond, of the being for itself which is consciousness turning itself against what is here below, of the being in and for itself which possesses itself like the Stoic sage, but in a way that is much more profound. We shall now examine particularly the first stage of this second phase.

215. To begin with, we shall consider consciousness as pure self-consciousness faced by its immutable but shaped God (*der gestaltete Unwandelbare*). So far as it is pure consciousness, we can say that it is formless in the face of the formed immutable; whereas in the first phase the particular appeared to be what was formed in the face of a formless immutable. The determinate form of the divine has given birth to an indeterminate multitude of confused feelings in the human soul.

The presence of the immutable only exists here in so far as it comes

from consciousness; it exists only, so to speak, from one side and under one aspect, because it is not until much later that we shall see that the attention paid to the immutable by consciousness is attention paid to consciousness by the immutable, and also that these two acts are joined in what we might call an intellectual love of the Notion. For in this love, the finite consciousness will know God only in so far as God knows himself in consciousness – in such a way that the theological relativism of which we have spoken reveals itself finally as a mystical monism.⁴⁶ But at this point, we must say simply that the consciousness without form stands before the formed immutable, but it is a formed immutable that does not have authentic or complete presence. We are in the presence of a God that consciousness reveals to itself, but it is a God who is linked with sensation, and who is, on that account, contradictory.

216. So the unhappy consciousness is not in possession of the form of the immutable, the way it is in itself, but only in possession of an incompletely formed immutable. Nevertheless, it is true that this unhappy consciousness, which is for the moment consciousness, pure and simple, is beyond thought pure and simple; it is beyond Stoic thought (which abstracts in a general way from particularity) and beyond sceptical thought (which is restlessness, and which is at bottom only particularity because it is 'contradiction without consciousness and the restless movement of this contradiction'. The pure and simple consciousness surpasses both this false, empty generality without particularity and without movement, and this contradictory particularity without generality and without rest. It unites the pure thought presented by the Stoics with real particularity at the same time. However, this is an intermediate state in which consciousness finds itself, a state where two terms are allied without mediation, a state where abstract thought – a thought conceived almost in the manner of the Stoics – touches the particularity of consciousness; and this particularity is very nearly the particularity conceived by the sceptics. But consciousness still does not have full awareness of this contact, and cannot through that awareness transform the contact into a deep union. In this way, a philosophy of the incarnation – or rather of the contact between mind and body, since we are not yet at the stage of the true incarnation – is the logical result of two ancient schools; and it is something like that, no doubt, which the meeting of Pascal and M. de Saci showed. Everything appeared to consciousness under the form of particularity, and consciousness had full awareness of its thinking particularity and also of the immutable in the form of particularity. But what consciousness does not have is awareness that the object, the immutable, the immutable under the form of particularity, is nothing other than itself, is nothing else than the particularity of consciousness. Consciousness is certainly this contact between the two, but it is not the contact *for itself*. The unity involves a contact between two abstract terms, but it is not

the fused unity that will be obtained through the synthetic action of consciousness, when it conceives this unity as itself as real *for itself* as the synthetic function – i.e. when it conceives that this unity is nothing other than itself, and discovers that its Incarnate God is itself. All that it lacks now is the consciousness *for itself* of its own self. Consciousness will only perceive itself as consciousness in the final moment. The spiritual content of Christianity will be truly and completely revealed only when consciousness reveals itself to itself in its fullness.

We can already say, at least, that there is a thinking particularity; in other words, that this one, the I – the whole vague region of the self – had arrived at the generality of thought.

Is this not already the prefiguration of what Christ will be in all his truth, a Christ very different from the unconscious mixture of particularity and universality that was the Olympus of the ancients? There, individuality attached itself in an inessential way to essence and stayed inessential.⁴⁷ Here, we find a fact that has ontological value, a fact that attaches thought to being, to the particular being itself. Here, we attain to the unity of being and essence. Here, we have a 'this' that is a general essence, a 'this' of which the negativity is no longer the sterile negativity of sensation, but the fertile negativity of thought. Spirit is now real.

217. Consciousness finds itself in the presence of conscious particularity. But its felt content is not explicit in the *Concept*; the *in itself* has not come to be *for itself*. Consciousness is in the presence of a beyond. No doubt its object beyond itself is nothing else, in itself, but a thinking particularity – Christ's apostles are all, equally, thinking particularities. But, the relationship between one and the other does not yet appear as pure thought. In this respect, the fact of having arrived at the idea of the contact of two thinking particularities distances the unity of these two particularities from consciousness, at least for the moment. Consciousness will arrive at this unity only later. At this stage, consciousness only tends towards thought, towards the thought that at another stage is itself. It is tendency and tenderness, meditation, self-sacrifice, devotion.⁴⁸ We have said that this consciousness has no form; and, in fact, its thought remains vague, musical thought such as that of a Schleiermacher, for example. It is thought that has not arrived at the *Begriff* – at the union of objectivity and immanence that characterizes the *Begriff* (and here the word *Begriff* is understood in the higher sense which we translate as 'Notion'). For the Concept from which we begin is a pure feeling – aspiration remains always for Hegel something conceptual⁴⁹ – whereas the Concept at which we arrive – the Notion – is full Reason.

The religious feeling as it is now conceived is a sort of interior groping, an infinite groping. It is not without object; but since its object is not notional, it remains something estranged. There is nothing further from the Notion, in one sense, than the religious feeling of the apostles before

the dead Christ, the feeling that Protestantism⁵⁰ sought to revive, a completely subjective feeling in the face of something which is all-transcending. The pure and simple consciousness presents itself under this first form as the movement of an infinite *Sehnsucht* (longing).

We speak of contact; but precisely in so far as it is contact, and lacking the feeling of the unity of this contact, consciousness is division. We are faced by the unhappy emotion of the disciples, who are conscious of themselves, but in their division – a division among themselves, division in relation to their object, a division that keeps them in a state of separation. At the same time, this *soul*, this heart, this feeling, this emotion is personified – according to what Hegel tells us in the *Philosophy of History*⁵¹ – in the German consciousness, in so far as the German consciousness is the vague feeling of itself, a feeling lacking determinate content. The thought of Schleiermacher well represents both the thought of the disciples at the moment of the death of Christ and the thought of the German world. Hegel thereby gives a content and an object to these indeterminate and divided feelings, as they face a being that is wrongly considered to be completely transcendent.

But if there is not here a unity of the Notion, there is at least certainty that, to the interior emotion, there corresponds externally, so to speak, the transcendent emotion of a God. For what is it other than an emotion, this God conceived as a particular thought? The disciples have the feeling that the object of their love – a nostalgic love which can only attain its object as something alien (a longing conceived by Jacobi, but at all times felt by Christians) – is an emotion pure and simple. It is a pure and simple thought that feels itself as particular. As conscious individuals, the disciples have the assurance that their object is a conscious individual and, in that respect, they know that, since their object thinks of itself as particular, it knows and appreciates their avid faith in it.

In this sense, after having separated these two terms, the feeling of their double particularity reunites them.

This recognition of one soul by another is something essential⁵² because, at all stages, we discover again this same process of recognition which, from the point of view of the *Phenomenology*, consists in the unity of a duality.⁵³ The very knowledge that each of these extremes has of itself comes from this recognition by the other.⁵⁴ The pious soul feels itself secure in this nostalgic state; but, on the other hand, it feels that this essence is a beyond which one cannot attain – a beyond which, the moment it is seized, escapes, or rather has already escaped. This essence has already escaped because, taking it as the immutable which thinks of itself as a particular, or taking it as Christ in his spiritual sense, consciousness reaches itself immediately in the immutable because it is an individual. But if it is itself that it attains, then it is itself *qua* opposed to the immutable. For we have not yet arrived at the union of the general

and the particular in the Notion. So consciousness cannot seize the essence; it must content itself with groping towards it. At the very moment where consciousness thinks it has attained it, it is thrown back on to itself. Instead of having seized the essence, it has only experienced a feeling and a sensation of its own self – its own self only in so far as it is inessential and separated. Consciousness feels that it is reaching its proper satisfaction, but this is precisely *its* proper satisfaction, that is to say, the satisfaction of its self, in so far as it is opposed to the immutable. The disciple faced with the dead Christ retires into himself. Again, the mystical is always thrown back into a state of coldness, and the pious soul is thrown back into a state of unhappiness – almost impiety. Christ himself, the principle of union, feels himself to be separated from all, even from the immutable. At the moment of union, the soul seizes upon itself in its proper separation. In the same way, the immutable can only appear to the soul as something particular or real. The two terms, the immutable and consciousness, cannot be fused. We remain in the presence of a divided consciousness, and of a beyond that is separated and divided from it. For the same reason, when instead of a fugitive beyond consciousness now wants to try to get hold of something here below – the individual object, or the Incarnate Christ – have we not seen that this object of the pious soul is a ‘this’ that is subject to the dialectic of the sensible world? The object can never be found where one looks for it – for it must always be a beyond, even when we place it in the world of the here below. In the first case, it was feeling; in the second, it is sensation; but in neither case is it that union of the particular and the general which is the Notion. For these two cases, and for the second case, above all (Hegel has recourse to this allusion for the second one only), one can say that consciousness will never find itself in presence of its life – but only in the presence of the tomb where this life was buried. If one conceives of this presence as the pious soul conceives it – and not as the presence of the Notion – then one must kneel before the cross or undertake the Crusades. But even with this tomb, one cannot assure oneself of possession. And, in the spirit of Hegel, who gives a metaphysical importance to historical events, and a historical reality to a metaphysical event – was he not led perhaps to make this link by his meditations on the way in which the religious metaphysics of Christianity become established? – the Crusades become the sign of the philosophical truth. If the Christians cannot, in a reliable way, assure themselves of these sacred places, if the Crusades must remain a vain effort, it is for the same reason that the sensible consciousness was unable ever to show us a ‘here’ without this ‘here’ itself vanishing.⁵⁵ There is a crusade of the sensible consciousness for the possession of the ‘here’; and there is a dialectic of the pious soul in the search for the tomb. These two events correspond to each other. They lead to nothing, save the destruction of

the sensible consciousness and the pious soul – in the sense in which we have just used the word. In fact, the pious soul is going to find by experience that the tomb, of the being that it considers to be real with an immutable reality, has no reality as the tomb of the immutable. This is precisely because it is, in the ordinary sense of the word, a reality. No tomb, no reality in the ordinary sense of the word can contain the immutable – the real reality. Consciousness will come to see that the vanished particularity is not the true particularity, precisely because it has vanished. Consciousness, unable to assure itself even of the possession of the tomb, must therefore renounce its hope of finding the particular immutable in the domain of reality, and its task of preserving it in time; for that would be wanting to hang on to what is no longer, or to hold what is not. Thus the disciple and the crusader in front of the tomb, the sentimental soul of the romantic aristocrat or of the man of the people whose imaginations are nourished by the sound of clocks and the vapours of incense, represent a state that must be surpassed by consciousness. That is how consciousness will become capable of finding true individuality, the general individuality.⁵⁶

Such is the outcome of the movement that Hegel calls, a bit further on, the Struggle of the Hearts [against the objective order].

218. We shall not lay stress on how subsequently the disciple, the crusader and the romantic return into themselves after their deception and feel themselves in their particularity; or on the stage of desire and work; or on the sanctification of the work by the communion and grace where the Eucharist is like the reversal of the diabolical meal of Adam; nor even on the inversion that comes to light after that – an inversion which leads consciousness to asceticism and repentance, through the idea of the freely given character of grace and of the incomplete character of communion. The important thing for us is that, through the unfolding of these contradictory aspects – going from the objective to the subjective, from the cult of the world to the contempt of the world, and *vice versa* – religion tends, bit by bit, to pass towards what signals its end, i.e. its conclusion and its destruction: absolute knowledge. Absolute knowledge is the coming together of the subjective and the objective, where the world is transmuted in its idea and the idea comes into existence.

The stage of the unhappy consciousness does not produce itself only once in the life of spirit. We find it again at different moments in the *Phenomenology*. When it is surpassed, it comes back to consciousness at new turnings of the road, right up to the point where consciousness is unified with the object of its search – the object which is at the same time the subject, so that it unites with itself as reality.

Unhappiness is produced whenever spirit takes consciousness of itself as transcendental; or as consciousness without content, changing perpetually

from one idea into another: an I which opposes itself to the not-I; a movement from being to non-being and non-being to being.

Thus, these pages of the *Phenomenology* represent to us a constant struggle between disharmonious elements, a tearing of consciousness that comes from its limitation. Until the moment where consciousness reaches its unity, we are in the presence of a game where the one who loses wins, where there is a continual reversal and incessant irony, where consciousness converges unceasingly on the contrary of what it is searching for.

But there is a turning-point in this cosmic story where consciousness leaves behind the varied appearance of the sensible world, frees itself from the empty night and the suprasensible beyond, and finds itself in the spiritual daylight of the present. Consciousness becomes able to assume the force to externalize itself, to realize itself, and to be one thing amidst many things.

To reach this point, however, it must pass beyond the twilight of the morning which is the unhappy consciousness, where the immutable sun can only see itself in the changing of the colours that oppose themselves to it. The day will reign and peace will come only when the elements are not conceived of as elements, but rather as Notions. As Notions, the elements are not simply opposed; they are at the same time opposed and united.

V The unhappy consciousness and spirit

Each of the states that consciousness goes through is a deepening of or, if you like, an elevation of the preceding stage: a depth or elevation consisting in the fact that consciousness goes on to an always greater unity. Stoicism and scepticism on one side and Judaism on the other come together in Christianity to bring to the daylight of consciousness what was shut in by these positions; in the process, the abstract oppositions that were contained in these positions become concrete, and ready to be transformed in union. In unifying the oppositions that it oscillates between, scepticism allies itself with Judaism; Judaism, in turn, in unifying its oppositions becomes the Christian unhappy consciousness and gives birth to the idea of the Incarnation; thus, the succession of Jewish kings gives birth to the child of God. Christianity – for which we were prepared on one side by the consciousness of human duality (scepticism), and on the other, by the contradictory consciousness of the absolute duality of man and God and of their immediate unity (Judaism) – is the feeling that the soul reaches in its unhappiness, the feeling of what is immutable only in so far as it is particular and of what is particular only in so far as it is immutable. But Christianity, though it can in contrast to Judaism, which is the religion of indeterminate beyond, be called the religion of the Incarnate beyond, remains a religion of the beyond. It wraps itself

first in the sensible element, which gives rise to a new opposition. Then, from this antithesis set at the beginning, consciousness goes at first not to a synthesis, but to a new point of contact, one that can only become a synthesis by expanding itself. The expansion of this point of contact into a new synthesis happens in three stages. In the first stage, there is contact without there being consciousness of this contact or of the unity of two terms; then, because the particular is grasped through a sensible form, it vanishes. The death of Christ, the Crusades, the romantic *longing* all indicate the same thing – the idea that the desire for contact must be surpassed. Consciousness will therefore pass into a sort of individualism, the feeling of self. At least so far as I desire and do my best, I exist – or so says the disciple before the dead Christ, the crusader facing the vanishing result of his victory, the romantic facing the uncertainty of his feeling of infinity. The mediator between the first and second stages of the unhappy consciousness is like that. This second stage, which Hegel studied next, is the stage of labour and effort, whether it be Candide cultivating his garden, or Faust cultivating his will to produce actions unceasingly new. This stage is one of nourishment from the destruction of material things;⁵⁷ or, more profoundly, it is the stage of the soul sanctifying its food with a feeling which is religious and communal.⁵⁸ This second stage, in its turn, cannot satisfy consciousness. Even in the communion, it has still not arrived at the idea of the identity between consciousness and the immutable. But, at the same time, consciousness does perceive that work and communion both imply the presence of the immutable; and that is how it will finally come to see that they imply the presence of its own unity with the immutable. It sees itself divided in labour and communion. But, at the same time, it sees that labour assumes communion; and that each like the other (even though this labour remains a merely superficial relationship between the outer surface of consciousness and the outer surface of reality) implies a grace done by the immutable, a gift coming from it. The immutable offers itself to consciousness in communion, and offers the world to it in labour. Consciousness recognizes these benefits and humiliates itself, first in a way which is partial and superficial and such that in its action of grace, it feels itself again as a particular; but later in a way that is total – and here we pass from the second to the third stage – because although asceticism, this total renunciation, only renews the feeling of the same particularity against which consciousness struggles, how can it occur without being dictated by the immutable? In this sense, the renunciation, precisely because it does not fulfil itself immediately, but thanks to the mediation of the immutable, is something positive. It is through the intervention of the priest, however, that the immutable influences the particular consciousness, and, at the end of the story, destroys it. And, we shall then be in the most opposite state imaginable in relation to Stoicism, the conscious-

ness of freedom. Consciousness will have become an object. But so far as this is so, it is so by the fact of grace.

Also, even in asceticism, consciousness is present, without being conscious of it, at the appearance of the idea of the person, indeed at the appearance of the ideas of the general will and of reason. After all, the 'I think' – does it not depend profoundly on the thought of the saints meditating in the cloister? The world is no longer separated from the spirit. But the screen of the middle term – the priest – prevents consciousness from perceiving for itself that it is in direct communion with God, that it has attained the unity of objectivity and independence. Consciousness does know, however – though in a way which remains indirect – that in so far as it is an unhappy consciousness, it has reached its own happiness. Its negation of action, this action of doing nothing (as Hegel said in his early writings, employing an expression which he uses again in the *Phenomenology*⁵⁹) is itself absolute action.

Here, then, are the three stages, the three successive and complementary aspects of the religious feeling that Hegel describes: religious desire; work and communion in a sanctified world; and desolation and humiliation. These three aspects take their place between the phase of absolute opposition between man and God and the phase of their absolute union. In effect, the religious desire is still affected by the element of separation which made it conceive of the divine as a beyond. If, in work and communion, we are closer to unity, we must nevertheless still surpass this state – indeed destroy it – because it still contains an element of particularity. But the desolation and humiliation brings us to the divine. Through humiliation, man arrives at the idea of the absolute act; through desolation, at the idea of absolute happiness. The principle of the Renaissance and the Reformation, the principle of the modern world – or rather of absolute knowledge – develops itself in this period of unhappiness that is interrupted by the appearance of Christ and then by the Reformation. But these interruptions are only momentary. The thought of Christ, the thought of Luther does not completely disengage itself fully according to Hegel except in the Hegelian philosophy itself, where every element of sensible opposition has disappeared. Here, spirit will be present as a unity and as an existence, mediated by the fact that, in itself, it will have reached and will maintain in itself (even though they are surpassed) the different modes that the *Phenomenology* strives to describe.

Religion is above all transcendence. One might say, in this setting, that its content always escapes and remains far away; and if it remains thus in the distance, that is just because it is a given content.⁶⁰ However, when one has interiorized religion, it will appear as essentially mediated. The unhappy consciousness is religion so far as it remains in the moment of transcendence, and only implicitly realizes that it has surpassed this moment. When consciousness arrives at the affirmation of its unity in its

duality, what was the source of its unhappiness will become the source of its happiness, and the three stages that characterize the religion of the Incarnation permit him to make us pass from his point of departure – the religion of opposition – to his point of arrival – the absolute religion. In that neither moment is denied, but is on the contrary conserved, this passage from opposition to union is what constitutes the Spirit.⁶¹

These pages also have a more general significance – or at least another sort of generality. If it is true that the nature of consciousness shows up as self-division before self-assembly, a tearing apart before a self-recovery into an indissoluble unity, so too this nature reveals a coincidence of consciousness and its essence – of consciousness and its object. This priority of division involves the unhappiness not only of consciousness, but of the world in general. The world is divided from what makes it united by a sort of cosmic tearing, or by an abyss that Reason will fill.

We have to add that in this process the immutable consciousness has not remained inactive. At the same time as through its unhappiness the individual consciousness becomes universal, the universal consciousness becomes subject. It passes through three stages: the kingdom of the Father, of the Son and of the Spirit – or in other words, from generality, to particularity, and into a final unity in the subject which is an object.⁶² But the *Phenomenology* must not see things from the noumenological point of view. It can only make us envisage the possibility, the necessity of it.

Notes

1. The translator would like to acknowledge the generous assistance of Professor H. S. Harris in reviewing the translation and identifying English references for many of Wahl's references.

2. Jean Wahl used his own translation, relying on Hegel's *Werke*, Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 1832–40, II, pp. 158–65. Since the following translation is for an English readership, I will reference Wahl's text according to the most recent English translation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (translated by A. V. Miller, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977). The paragraph numbers in my translation of Wahl's commentary correspond to the numbered paragraphs in Miller's translation. This translation also provides the Miller paragraph numbers for all of Wahl's references to the *Phänomenologie* and identifies many of his other Hegel references. Wahl's references to the *Philosophy of Religion* in the *Werke*, 1832ff. have generally resisted identification because he appears to have been using Marheineke's first edition, to which I do not have any access. The English translation by Speirs and Sanderson is from the second edition, so the finding of the relevant passages in English would still be a matter of some difficulty. For similar reasons, I cannot identify most of his references to the *Philosophy of History* lectures. The 'Reclam edition' that he used is not available to me.

3. Hegel uses here an expression already found in his essay *Über einige charakteristische Unterschiede der alten Dichter* (Rosenkranz, p. 460).

4. *Phänomenologie*, p. 141 [Miller, ¶20].

5. See *System der Sittlichkeit* [Wahl refers to the edition edited by G. Mollat (1893), which has not been located. His reference is to p. 4 of that edition, which is implausible. This is probably a typographical error. The only discussion of the Lordship–Bondage relation in the *System of Ethical Life* is on pp. 33–5 of the 1967 reprint of G. Lasson's 1923 edition. For an English translation, see H. S. Harris and T. M. Knox, (eds and trans), *System of Ethical Life and First Philosophy of Spirit* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1979), pp. 125–6.]

6. *Phänomenologie*, p. 152 [Miller, ¶199]. Cf. pp. 360, 361, 398, 563 [Miller, ¶s 479, 480, 527, 750]. Cf. *Philosophie der Religion*, II, pp. 224–6 [Speirs and Sanderson, II].

7. *Philosophie der Religion*, II, pp. 144, 145, 141, 156 [Speirs and Sanderson, II, 309ff.].

8. *Phänomenologie*, p. 158 [Miller, ¶202].

9. See *Geschichte der Philosophie*, III, p. 687; IV, 3 [Haldane and Simson, III, 548. Wahl's 'IV,3' is a mistake of some sort – there is no such vol. in the 1832 *History of Philosophy*; *Werke* 1832 IV, 3 is the first page of 'Logic of Essence' in *Science of Logic*, Miller, ¶389 – but not relevant here. Probably XIV is meant, which is Haldane and Simson, I, 350].

10. See *Phänomenologie*, p. 569 [Miller, ¶759].

11. *ibid.*, pp. 18, 127, 156 [Miller, ¶s 22, 163, 205].

12. See *Phänomenologie*, II, p. 71 [Miller, ¶87].

13. *ibid.*, p. 15 [Miller, ¶18].

14. *ibid.*, pp. 151, 156 [Miller, ¶s 197, 205].

15. *ibid.*, pp. 442, 496, 508 [Miller, ¶s 583–4, 658, 671].

16. *Philosophie der Geschichte*, p. 407. [The Reclam edition has not been obtained. The reference is probably to Sibree, p. 318].

17. See *Phänomenologie*, p. 361 [Miller, ¶480].

18. *Philosophie der Religion*, II, 227 [not identified].

19. *ibid.*, 192 [not identified] and Lasson (ed.), I, 228 [the relevant paragraph appears to be the one translated in Hodgson, I, 443 (at 332). But in the next paragraph the texts diverge]. *Phänomenologie*, pp. 506 and 586: spirit is community [Miller, ¶s 670–1, 781].

20. *Phänomenologie*, p. 563 [Miller, ¶751].

21. See *Philosophie der Religion*, I, p. 186 [not identified].

22. See *Phänomenologie*, p. 403 [Miller, ¶534] and *Philosophie der Religion*, Lasson (ed.), II, 2, pp. 6, 7 [Hodgson, II, 124–6].

23. See *Phil. der Religion*, Lasson (ed.), II, 2, p. 94 [see Hodgson, II, 442–4. Note that the next paragraph in Lasson (p. 95) is from 1831 – see Hodgson, II, 683–4 n. 492].

24. See *Phil. der Religion*, Lasson (ed.), I, p. 241 [See Hodgson, I, 212–13 with n. 75].

25. See on the place of this idea in Romanticism Kircher. *Philosophie der Romantik*, p. 190.

26. Instead of the Jewish religion, we could just as well take the religion of the Brahmins as our example of the absolute opposition between the general and the particular (in accordance with *Philosophie der Geschichte*, p. 217) [Lasson's edn of *Phil. of Hist.* was published (2nd edn) in 1923; it may be that the Reclam edition was based on it. If the ref. is to Lasson, I, 247, see Nisbet, p. 200].

27. See *Theologische Jugendschriften*, Nohl, p. 400, 'Die Form wie er als einzelner gegen einzelne . . .' [not translated as far as I know].

28. Hegel distinguishes two 'unhappy consciousnesses': that of the Jewish people, and that of the Roman people (*Philosophie der Religion*, II, 224) [this would appear to be Hodgson, II, 699 n. 544; Speirs and Sanderson, II, 322; however, having regard for Speirs and Sanderson, III, 7–81, the reference needed was *Philosophie der Religion*, II, 186–8 or Spiers and Sanderson, II, 321–3].

29. See *Phänomenologie*, p. 509 [Miller, ¶673].

30. See p. 509, 'Sein unwandelbares Wesen' [Miller, ¶673].

31. See *Phänomenologie*, pp. 162, 163, 164, 169 [Miller, ¶s 212–17, 223].

32. *ibid.*, p. 170 [Miller, ¶226].

33. *ibid.*, p. 161, cf. p. 141 [Miller, ¶s 211, 178–9].

34. *ibid.*, p. 172 [Miller, ¶s 229–30].

35. See Nohl, p. 381 [Knox, 307–8].

36. *ibid.*, p. 392. The return cannot be suppressed in a unilateral way.

37. *Philosophie der Religion*, II, 229 [Speirs and Sanderson, II, 12–13, but there may be a mistake here].

38. This 'noumenological' point of view is very nearly attained at the end of the *Phänomenologie*, p. 582 [Miller, ¶s 776–8].

39. See *Philosophie der Religion*, Lasson (ed.), I, 258 [Hodgson, I, 349 (with n. 169)].

40. *Philos. der Religion*, I, p. 122 [*Philosophie der Religion*, I, 122, is Speirs and Sanderson, I, 126, but the reference needed seems to be I, 34 (Speirs and Sanderson, I, 33)]; cf. *Philos. der Religion*, Lasson (ed.), I, 148 [note that I, 147 gives this sentence *verbatim*: see Hodgson, I, 308–9, especially nn. 95, 97].

41. *Philosophie der Religion*, I, p. 104 [Speirs and Sanderson, I, 107].

42. See *Phänomenologie*, p. 409 [Miller, ¶543].

43. *ibid.*, pp. 402–3 [Miller, ¶s 531–3].

44. *ibid.*, pp. 572–3 [Miller, ¶s 762–3]; *Philosophie der Religion*, II, X, 235 [This is Speirs and Sanderson, III, 20, but it is hardly relevant. The X is an error].

45. See *Phänomenologie*, p. 585 [Miller, ¶780].

46. See *Philosophie der Religion*, II, 166 [Speirs and Sanderson, II, 299, but this is not what is needed].

47. See *Phänomenologie*, pp. 556, 558, 571 [Miller, ¶s 740–1, 744, 761].

48. On devotion, see *Geschichte der Philosophie*, pp. 90, 93 [Haldane and Simson, I, 73–4, 76] and *Philosophie der Religion*, I, 119, 120, 168, and II, 156 [should be Speirs and Sanderson, I, 122–4, 173, 160–1 – but this does not work out]. In these passages (except for *Philosophie der Religion*, I, 120, and equally *Philosophie der Religion*, Lasson (ed.), I, 238, 239, 240) [Hodgson, I, 208–10], the concept of devotion is different from that in the writings of the young Hegel and in the *Phänomenologie*. On feeling, see *Philosophie der Religion*, I, 172, particularly n. 78 [not identified]. On sensation, see *Philosophie der Religion*, II, 103, 104 [not identified].

49. See *Philosophie der Geschichte* (ed. Reclam), p. 207 [not identified].

50. See Nohl, p. 342 [Knox, p. 301].

51. Ed. Reclam, p. 445; cf. p. 524 [not identified].

52. See *Phänomenologie*, p. 339 [Miller, ¶456].

53. *ibid.*, pp. 140, 142 [Miller, ¶s 178, 185].

54. *ibid.*, pp. 142, 146 [Miller, ¶s 184, 191; see also Miller ¶192].

55. See *Philosophie der Geschichte*, pp. 490–500 [Sibree, 389–98]. Cf. *Geschichte der Philosophie*, I, pp. 90–1 [Haldane and Simson, I, 73–4].

56. *Phänomenologie*, pp. 382, 383: 'where the dialectic of the sensible leads to the idea of the intelligible' [Miller, ¶s 506–9]; similarly, p. 273 [Miller, ¶363].

57. See *Philosophie der Religion*, Lasson (ed.), I, p. 236 [Hodgson, I, 445–6].

58. *ibid.*, II, 2, p. 169 [Hodgson, II, 174–5].

59. *Phänomenologie*, p. 262 [this is a mistake for *Phänomenologie*, 169. See Miller, ¶225].

60. See *Philosophie der Religion*, II, 53 [Speirs and Sanderson, II, 178].

61. *Philosophie der Religion*, Lasson (ed.), I, p. 278 [Hodgson I, 363, esp n. 189].

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The idea of death in the philosophy of Hegel* (1947)

Alexandre Kojève

In a passage of fundamental importance in the Preface to the *Phenomenology* (pp. 19–24),† Hegel outlines the major themes of his philosophy and indicates its principal purpose; he enumerates there the principles that lie at the basis of his thought and the principal consequences that flow from them. An understanding of this passage will provide the key to an understanding of the Hegelian System in its totality and to the *Phenomenology* in particular. In addition, this passage will show clearly the primordial role that the idea of death plays in the philosophy of Hegel.

Hegel begins by indicating what the novel and essential content of his philosophy consists in, according to him.

He says this (p. 19, lines 24–7):

In my opinion, which can be justified only through the exposition of the System itself, everything depends (*es kommt alles darauf an*) on this, that one expresses and understands (*aufzufassen*) the True (*Wahre*) not [only] as *substance*, but rather just as much as *subject*.

This phrase is directed first of all against Schelling and his conception of the 'Absolute' as 'Substance'. But that Schellingian conception merely reiterates the Spinozist conception, which, in its turn, represents a radical form of traditional – that is Greek or pagan – ontology. Hegel therefore places his philosophy in opposition to all those that preceded it (with the sole exception of the philosophies of Kant and Fichte and, to a certain extent, that of Descartes). Following Thales and Parmenides, pre-Hegelian philosophers attached themselves exclusively to the notion of 'Substance', while forgetting that the notion of 'Subject' is just as primordial and irreducible.

Philosophy is not only a truth or a true description; it is rather, or

should be, a description of the True. Now if Truth (*Wahrheit*) is the correct and complete 'revelation' (= description) of Being and of the Real through coherent Discourse (Logos), the True (*das Wahre*) is Being-revealed-through-discourse-in-its-reality. It is not enough therefore for the philosopher to describe Being; he must also describe revealed-Being [*l'Etre-révélé*] and [must] give an account of the fact of the revelation of Being through Discourse. The philosopher must describe the *totality* of what *is* and exists. Now in fact this totality implies Discourse and in particular philosophical discourse. The philosopher therefore is concerned not only with static-[and]-given-Being (*Sein*) or with the *Substance*, which is the Object of Discourse, but with the *Subject* of Discourse and of philosophy: it is not enough for him to speak of Being that is given to him; he must also speak of himself and [must] explain himself to himself in so far as [he is] speaking of Being and of himself.

In other words, philosophy must explain how and why Being is realized, not only as nature and as natural World, but also as Man and as historical World. Philosophy may not limit itself to being a Philosophy of nature; it must also be an anthropology; in addition to the ontological bases of natural reality it must investigate those of human reality, which alone is capable of revealing itself through Discourse.

It is by describing the True also as Subject, or in other words, by analysing the specific characteristics of the human reality, that Hegel discovers the *dialectical* structure of Being and of the Real, and the ontological category of *Negativity* that is at the basis of that dialecticity. And it is in describing the real dialectic that he discovers the *circularity* of the True and of Truth, and therefore of his philosophy itself.

Hegel says it himself in a passage that follows shortly after the text just cited (p. 20, lines 5–19):

Further, living Substance [i.e. neither static nor given] is Being which is in truth *Subject*; or, what is the same thing – [living Substance is Being] which is in truth objectively-real only to the extent that substance is the [dialectical-] movement of the act-of-self-positing [*l'acte-de-se-poser-soi-même*] (*Sich-selbstsetzens*) or mediation (*Vermittlung*) with itself of the act-of-becoming-other-to-itself (*Sichanderswerdens*). As Subject, Substance is pure *Negativity*, *simple-or-undivided* (*einfache*), and by that very token the dichotomy [*dédoublement*] (*Entzweiung*) of the simple-or-individual, or the opposing (*entgegensetzende*) duplication [*doublement*] (*Verdopplung*), which is equally (*wieder*) the negation of that indifferent (*gleichgültigen*) distinction-or-differentiation (*Verschiedenheit*) and of its opposite (*Gegensatzes*). It is only this equality which *reconstitutes* itself, or the reflection within itself in other-ness (*Anderssein*), which is the True, [and] not the *primordial* (*ursprüngliche*) unifying-unity as such, that is [the unity-

unifying] *immediate* (*unmittelbar*) as such. The True is the becoming of itself, the circle which presupposes its final-term (*Ende*) as its purpose and which has it as [its] beginning, and which is objectively-real only through the realization-development (*Ausführung*) and by its final-term.

This very condensed passage implies all the fundamental notions of Hegel's 'dialectic' and sums up all there is in his philosophy that is essential and truly new.

If *Substance* conceived as natural static[-and]-given-Being (*Sein*) has Identity (with itself) as its ontological ground, the *Subject* of the Discourse revealing that Being and itself, that is, Man, has Negativity as its ultimate basis. Now the Man who is dominated in his very being by Negativity is not static[-and]-given-Being, but *Action* or the Act-of-positing-itself or of creating itself. And it is objectively-real only as a 'dialectical movement', whose result is 'mediated' [*médiatisé*] by *negation* of the 'given-Being' that serves it as a point of departure. It is Negativity, associated in Being with the Identity of Being, that splits that Being into Object and Subject, in creating [a] Man opposed to nature. But it is also this same Negativity, realized as human existence in the midst of nature, that reunites anew the Subject and Object in and through true consciousness, in which Discourse 'coincides' with the Being that it reveals. The True, or revealed-Being, is not therefore, as Parmenides and his imitators thought it, the primary and primordial, namely, 'immediate' or given and natural identity of being and thought, but [rather, the True is] the *result* of a long active process that begins by *opposing* Man to the nature of which he speaks and which he 'negates' by his action.

The re-establishment of Unity, or the final coincidence of 'Substance' and 'Subject' is effected in the adequate description of the *totality* of Being and of the Real by 'absolute' philosophy (to the elaboration of which is reduced all the human existence of its author – the Wise Man [*le Sage*] – who ceases therefore to oppose himself actively, as 'Subject', to nature taken as 'Substance'). But the totality of the Real implies human reality, which exists only as a creative *movement*. Perfect and definitive adequation of Being (= Substance) and Discourse (= Subject) cannot therefore be effected until the end of times, when the creative movement of Man will have been completed. And that completion is revealed by the fact that Man advances no further and is content to travel again (in his philosophical thought) the road already covered (by his active existence). Thus 'absolute' philosophy, or the True in the strong sense of the term, can appear only in the form of a *circular* description of the real dialectic taken in its totality. That philosophy on the one hand describes the road that leads from the birth of Discourse (= Man) in the heart of Being (= nature) up to the advent of the Man who will reveal

the totality of Being through his Discourse, and on the other hand it [the 'absolute' philosophy] is itself this Discourse that reveals the Totality. But that Totality implies the Discourse that reveals it, as well as the process of becoming of this Discourse. Thus, in arriving at the end of the philosophical description, we are thrown back towards its beginning, which is the description of its becoming. The 'final-term' of this described becoming is the advent of absolute philosophy. But that advent is also the goal we pursued from the start, because philosophy is not absolute, it does not describe the *totality*, except to the extent that it itself understands itself as describing its own becoming. But this description can be done only from the point of view of absolute philosophy, which is therefore the 'beginning' or the origin of all adequate description. This is to say that just like the Totality it describes, absolute philosophy cannot be objectively realized any more than the other [the Totality] except in and through its 'development', that is as the *sum total* of its circular discourse forming an indivisible whole, which reproduces the closed dialectic of reality. It is this circularity of philosophical discourse that guarantees its unsurpassable and unmodifiable *totality*, and therefore its absolute *truth*.

Hegel says it himself (p. 21, lines 3–8), in taking up again (after having written an explanatory note) the idea expressed at the end of the passage cited:

The True is the Whole [*le Tout*]. Now the Whole is nothing but the essential-reality (*Wesen*) which completes-or-perfects-itself through its development. It must be said of the Absolute that it is essentially [a] *result*, that it is only at the *end* what it is in truth; and it is precisely in this that its nature consists, to be [an] objectively-real-entity (*Wirkliches*), subject or act-of-becoming-itself (*Sichselbstwerden*).

The True, or Being-revealed-through-discourse, is a *Totality*, that is the sum-total of a creative or dialectical *movement*, which produces Discourse in the midst of Being. The Absolute or the *totality* of the real is not merely Substance, but rather Subject revealing the real perfectly; however, it is such only at the end of its dialectical (= historical) becoming, which concludes with its own revelation. And this revealing becoming [*ce devenir révélateur*] signifies that the Totality implies *human* reality, which is not a *given* eternally identical to itself, but a temporally progressive *act* of self-creation [*auto-crétation*].

This self-creation of Man is effected through the *negation* of the given (natural and human). The human reality, or the Ego [*le Moi*], is therefore not a natural or 'immediate' reality, but a dialectical or 'mediated' reality. To conceive [of] the Absolute as Subject (and that is what is essential, according to Hegel), is therefore to conceive [of] it as implying Negativity

and as realizing itself not only as nature but rather more as [the] Ego or as Man, that is as creative or historical becoming.

And this is what Hegel says (after a new explanatory note) in the sentence that follows after the passage cited (p. 21, lines 27–31):

Mediation is nothing other than [an] equality-with-itself (*Sichselbstgleichheit*) which moves[-dialectically]; or (even further) it is reflection in itself, the constitutive-element (Moment) of the Ego existing-for-itself, pure Negativity, or [when it is] reduced to its pure abstraction – *simple-or-undivided becoming*.

And Hegel goes on (after a new note) to say this (p. 22, lines 10–11):

What has just been said can also be expressed by saying that Reason (*Vernunft*) is a *teleological Action* (*zweckmässiges Tun*).

To say that the Absolute is not only Substance, but also Subject, is to say that the Totality implies Negativity in addition to Identity. It is also to say that Being realizes itself, not only as nature, but also as Man. And it is to say, finally, that Man – who does not differ essentially from nature except to the extent that he is Reason (Logos) or coherent Discourse endowed with a meaning that reveals Being – is himself not given-Being, but create-ive Action (= negate-ive of the given). Man is dialectical or historical (= free) movement revealing Being through Discourse only because he lives in function of the *future*, which presents itself to him in the form of a *project* or as a 'goal' (*Zweck*) to be realized through action negate-ive of the given, and because he is not himself real as Man except to the extent that he creates himself through such action as a *work* (*Werk*).

It is from [this] introduction into ontology of the fundamental category of Negativity or of Action (*Tat* or *Tun*, which is the 'true being of Man') that flow all the characteristic traits of Hegelian (= 'dialectical') philosophy.

From this results, among other things, a consequence we already know of and that Hegel formulates as follows (p. 23, lines 21–4):

Among the diverse consequences that flow from what has been said, we might take note of that one [which consists in saying] that knowledge is not objectively-real and cannot be exhibited (*dargestellt*) except as Science or as *System*.

'Science' or 'System' signifies in Hegel the adequate, and therefore *circu-lar*, description of the completed or *closed* totality of the real dialectical movement. And in fact, as soon as we introduce Negativity or *create-ive*

Action into given-Being, we cannot make any pretence to *absolute*, or *total* and *definitive*, truth except by admitting that the creative dialectical process is *completed*. Now a description of the *completed* dialectical process, that is of the process that ends up in a term whose negation is no longer the creation of a *new* term [– such a description] can indeed be only *circular*.¹

And finally, in concluding the passage (pp. 19–24) in which he exposes briefly the essential traits of his System as a whole, Hegel says that we can sum up all that he asserts concerning the dialecticity of Being by saying that the Absolute is *Spirit* (*Geist*).

Hegel expresses himself as follows (p. 24, lines 7–16 and 27–30):

[The fact] that the True is objectively-real only as System, or that Substance is essentially Subject, is expressed in the representation (*Vorstellung*) which speaks of (*ausspricht*) the Absolute as [being] *Spirit* – a most sublime concept, and [one] that belongs peculiarly to modern times and to its [Christian] religion. Only spiritual-being (*das Geistige*) is *objectively-real-entity* (*das Wirkliche*): it is [on the one hand] essential-reality or *entity-existing-in-itself* (*Ansichseiende*); [it is on the other hand] the *entity-which-relates-itself* [to itself and to others] (*das sich Verhaltende*) and the *specifically-determined-entity* (*das Bestimmte*), *other-being* (*Anderssein*) and *being-for-itself* (*Fürsichsein*); and [it [*das Geistige*] is finally] the *entity-which-remains in itself* (*in sich selbst Bleibende*) in this specific-determination or in its being-outside-itself (*Aussersichsein*); that is to say that it [*das Geistige*] is *in and for itself* (*an und für sich*) . . . Spirit which knows-or-is-aware-of itself [as being] thus developed (*entwickelt*) as Spirit, is *Science*. It [Science] is the objective-reality of Spirit and the realm that it constructs [for] itself in its own element.

To say that the Absolute is Spirit is to affirm the *dialectical* structure of Being and of the Real taken as a whole or as an integral totality. For Spirit is, at the same time, [all of the following:] Being-in-itself (Identity, Thesis, given-Being, nature), Being-for-itself (Negativity, Antithesis, Action, Man), and Being-in-and-for-itself (Totality, Synthesis, Work, History = 'movement'). Being dialectical *totality*, spiritual-entity is objectively-*real-entity*, and it alone is this. For concrete reality implies *everything* that is, in whatever manner: [and that means] the natural World as much as the human or historical World and the Universe of discourse. Subject and Object, Thought and Being, nature and Man are but *abstractions*, when we take them in isolation, just as isolated discourses and particular thingish [*chosistes*] entities are *abstractions*. Only the *sum total* of Reality, revealed through the *sum total* of Discourse, [only such a sum-total] is an objective-Reality; and this *sum-total* in a double sense –

that is the natural World implying the Man who speaks of it – is precisely what Hegel calls 'Spirit'.

To study the Real philosophically by conceiving [of] it as Spirit is not, therefore, to limit oneself, as did the Greeks and the philosophical tradition, to the phenomenological, metaphysical and ontological description of given-Being and of the natural [and] 'eternal' Cosmos, but [it is rather] to extend this triple description to the create-ive Action which is Man, and to his historical World. And it is thus alone that the described Real appears as dialectical or 'trinitary', namely, as 'spiritual'.

Now the Man that Hegel has in mind is not the one that the Greeks thought they had perceived and that they bequeathed to philosophical posterity. This pretended Man of the ancient [or Greek] tradition is in fact a purely natural (= identical) being, who has neither freedom (= Negativity), nor history, nor individuality properly speaking. Just like the animal, he can only 'represent', in and through his real and active existence, and eternal 'idea' or 'essence', given once and for all and remaining identical to itself. Just like the life of an animal, his empirical-existence is absolutely determined by the natural place (*topos*) that he occupies for all time in the midst of a given [and] unchanging Cosmos (his occasional 'swervings' being but the effect of 'chance'). And if he differs essentially from the animal, it is solely by [virtue of] his thought or his coherent discourse (Logos), whose appearance in the Cosmos, moreover, could never be explained. But this Discourse negates nothing and creates nothing: it is content to reveal the given real (*error* remaining in fact inexplicable). Discourse – that is Man – is therefore incorporated into given-Being. And what there is, in the final analysis, is this one and unique Being, which thinks itself eternally in its given totality. Or better, as Spinoza will say later, what there is in the final analysis – is [a] God who is Substance.

The Man that Hegel analyses is on the contrary [that] Man who appears in the Judaeo-Christian pre-philosophical tradition, the only [one that is] truly anthropological. That tradition has maintained itself in the course of 'modern times' in the form of 'faith' or 'theology', [forms] incompatible with ancient and traditional science or philosophy. And it is that [Judaeo-Christian] tradition that transmitted to Hegel the notion of the *free historical Individual* (or of the 'Person'), [a notion] that this latter [Hegel] was the first to analyse *philosophically*, by trying to reconcile it with the fundamental notions of the pagan philosophy of nature.² According to that Judaeo-Christian tradition, Man differs *essentially* from nature, and he differs from it, not in his thought alone, but by his very activity. Nature is a 'sin' in Man and for Man: he can and must *oppose* himself to it and *negate* it in himself. Even while living in nature, he does not submit to its laws (miracles!): to the extent that he is opposed to it and negates it, he is independent in the face of it; he is autonomous or *free*.

And by living 'as a stranger' in the natural World, by being opposed to it and to its laws, he creates there a new World that is his own; a *historical* World, in which man can be 'converted' and can become a being radically *other* than what he is as a given natural being (*Anderssein*). In this *historical* World, and through this *free* 'conversion', man is not any sort of representative of an eternal or immutably given 'species': he is created, he creates himself, as an *individual* unique of its kind.

When Hegel says that all of his philosophy is nothing else but an attempt to conceive Substance as Subject, he means therefore that that philosophy has for its principal goal to render an account of the existence of Man in the natural World, Man being conceived in the same fashion as the Judaeo-Christian anthropological tradition conceives [of] him. And that is precisely why, in the text cited, Hegel makes use of the word 'Spirit' in order to sum up the whole of his philosophy. For he is concerned to underscore the Judaeo-Christian origin of the *anthropological* notion of *Geist* and to oppose that 'modern' notion to the whole ancient or pagan tradition, which is a tradition of the [one] sole 'Substance' or of *natural* given-Being (*Sein*).

But if, according to the cited text, Hegel detaches himself from the pagan philosophical tradition and accepts the Judaeo-Christian anthropological tradition, he underlines in this same text [the fact] that he also separates himself from this latter tradition on a point of extreme philosophical importance.

The fact is that the Judaeo-Christian anthropological tradition is an essentially religious tradition, namely, theist (and 'theological'). To be sure, the Judaeo-Christians discovered the 'spirituality' (= dialecticity) of Man, which is to say his freedom, his historicity and his individuality. But for them 'spirituality' is realized and manifests itself fully only in the beyond, and Spirit, properly so-called, truly 'objectively-real' Spirit, is God: [i.e.] an infinite and eternal being. Man himself, made in the image of God, is truly 'spiritual' only to the extent that he is eternal, and he is eternal or 'immortal' by the very fact that he is Spirit. Man *really* transcends the natural World in this sense, that he lives also in a *transcendent* World (and not only in a 'transcendental' historical World that is *immanent* to nature). This [transcendent] World is *beyond* nature, which among other things implies Man taken in his empirical-existence (*Dasein*); but this World is said to be more 'objective' and still more 'real' than the natural World here below. Man penetrates into it after his death, never more to leave it; and he also participates in it while living, by having been in it already before his birth. [Kojève is doubtless referring here to intra-uterine baptism.] To say that Man has an 'immortal soul' (which is precisely the Spirit in him) is to admit the reality of that transcendent World; and to admit that reality is to affirm the immortality or the infinitude of Man. Now this [transcendent] World does not depend on

Man: it is *given* to him once and for all, being 'prior' and essentially immutable in itself. It is on the contrary temporal Man who depends absolutely on this transcendent World: the historical World that Man creates in the here-below is in fact but a reflection in spatio-temporal nature of the eternal World of the beyond. This eternal World is therefore not properly speaking human: it is *beyond* the free historical individual, just as he is beyond animals and things. This infinite and eternal World is a *divine* World, and its one and unique totality, which is Spirit, is not Man but God. Man gains access to God only *after his death*, and it is then alone that he realizes and fully manifests his 'spirituality'.

Now according to Hegel 'spiritual' or 'dialectical' being is necessarily *temporal* and *finite*. The Christian notion of an infinite and eternal Spirit is contradictory in itself: infinite being is necessarily 'natural' given-[and-] static-Being; and created or create-ive, 'dynamic', namely, historic or 'spiritual' being, is necessarily limited in time, which is to say [that it is] essentially mortal. And the Judaeo-Christian tradition did indeed finally take account of the matter. By admitting the immortality of the soul, it admitted the reality of the divine World that is the 'natural place' of Man after his death (that death nullifying him as the integrating element of the natural and human World here below). And by the force of the logic of things, Christian thought had to subordinate immortal Man to his eternal infinite transcendent God. It had to give up human freedom and therefore the true historicity and individuality of Man. At one stroke, the three fundamental anthropological(= dialectical) categories were applied literally only to the true Spirit, which is God: for Christian theological thought, Jesus Christ is the only free historical Individual properly speaking, the freedom, historicity and individuality of the ordinary man being no more than simple effects of divine 'grace', that is [effects] of a trans-human action of the trans-mundane God. But even in applying these categories to the eternal God-Man one runs up against insurmountable difficulties. The Christ is truly autonomous only to the extent that he is God. But being God he can be nothing other than the one and unique Being who thinks himself while remaining eternally identical to himself. Instead of a free historical Individual we have therefore that Substance-Absolute that Parmenides already had in view, that Spinoza rediscovered, and that Schelling revived at the very moment at which Hegel was elaborating his 'dialectical' or anthropological philosophy.

Hegel wanted, from the start, to apply to Man the Judaeo-Christian notion of free historical Individuality, unknown in pagan antiquity. But in [the course of] philosophically analysing that 'dialectical' notion, he saw it implied finitude or temporality. He understood that Man could not be a free historical individual except on condition of being *mortal* in the proper and strong sense of the term, that is finite in time and conscious of his finitude. And having understood that, Hegel denied survival:

the Man that he has in mind is real only to the extent that he lives and acts in the midst of nature; outside the natural World he is a pure nothingness.

But to deny survival is in fact to deny God himself. For to say that Man, who *transcends* nature effectively to the extent that he negates it (by Action), annihilates himself none the less as soon as he situates himself *outside* it by dying in it as an animal – to say that is to say that there is *nothing* beyond the natural World. The would-be ‘transcendent’ or ‘divine’ *non-natural* World is in reality only the ‘transcendental’ (or speaking) World of historical human existence, [a world] which does not go beyond the temporal and spatial framework of the natural World. And ‘God’ is objectively real only at the interior of this natural World, where he exists solely in the form of the theological discourse of Man.

Thus, Hegel does not accept the Judaeo-Christian anthropological tradition except in a radically secularized or atheistic form. The Spirit-Absolute or the Subject-Substance, of which Hegel speaks, is not God. The Hegelian Spirit is the spatio-temporal totality of the natural World and implies human Discourse revealing this World and itself. Or better, and what is the same thing, Spirit is Man-in-the-World: the mortal Man who lives in a World without God and who speaks of all that exists in it and of all that he creates in it, including himself.

And this is what Hegel says implicitly at the end of the passage cited. He says there that ‘Spirit’ is ‘Science’, that ‘Science’ is the only ‘objective-reality’ of Spirit. Now this ‘Science’ is nothing else but Hegelian philosophy, which appeared in the midst of the natural World at the end of the historical becoming of Man. Spirit is therefore nothing other than the spatio-temporal totality of the natural World, to the extent that it is entirely revealed through the discourse of the perfect (= satisfied) man or of the Wise Man [*le Sage*], this discourse being itself a simple integration of the true meaning of all the discourses spoken by men in the course of History. Or better still: the Spirit that the Judaeo-Christians called ‘God’ is in reality Hegelian philosophy, to the extent that the latter is absolutely *true*, that is to the extent that it reveals correctly and completely *all* that has been, is and will be.

Now according to Hegel, the discursive revelation of Being is possible only if the revealing or speaking being is essentially finite or mortal. Hegel’s Spirit is not therefore truly a ‘divine’ Spirit (because there are no *mortal* gods): it is *human* in the sense that it is a discourse that is immanent to the natural World and that has for its ‘support’ a natural being limited in its existence by time and space.

When Hegel says that the essential content of his whole philosophy can be summed up by saying that it interprets Substance as Subject or [that it] conceives the Absolute as Spirit, that signifies that this philosophy must above all philosophically render an account of itself as a Discourse

revealing in a complete and adequate manner the totality of Being and of the Real. It achieves this by explaining how and why Man comes to speak in a coherent fashion of himself and of the World in which he lives and that he creates. And that explanation is a phenomenological, metaphysical and ontological description of Man understood as free historical Individual. Now to describe Man as a free historical Individual is to describe him [thus]: as 'finite' in and through himself, on the ontological level; as 'worldly' or spatial and temporal, on the metaphysical level; and as 'mortal' on the phenomenological level. On this last level, Man 'appears' as a being who is always conscious of his death, [who] often freely accepts it, and, aware of what he is doing, sometimes inflicts it on himself. Thus the 'dialectical' or anthropological philosophy of Hegel is in the final analysis *a philosophy of death* (or, what is the same thing: of atheism).

Analysis of the passage of the Preface to the *Phenomenology* in which Hegel outlines the major themes of his philosophy shows clearly the primordial role that the idea of death plays in that philosophy. Acceptance without reserve of the fact of death, or of human finitude conscious of itself, is the ultimate source of all of Hegel's thought, which does no more than draw out all the consequences, even the most ultimate, of the existence of this fact. According to that thought, it is by voluntarily accepting the danger of death in a Struggle for pure prestige that Man appears for the first time in the natural World; and it is by resigning himself to death, by revealing it through his discourse, that Man arrives finally at absolute Knowledge or at Wisdom, in thus completing History. For it is by starting out from the idea of death that Hegel works out his Science or the 'absolute' philosophy, which alone is capable of philosophically rendering an account of the fact of the existence in the World of a finite being conscious of its finitude and sometimes disposing of it as it likes.

Thus, Hegel's absolute Knowledge or Wisdom and the conscious acceptance of death understood as complete and definitive annihilation are one and the same. Hegel says it himself in so many words in another passage of the Preface (pp. 29ff.), [which is] of absolutely pivotal importance. And it is only in reading this truly remarkable passage that we grasp the ultimate themes of Hegel's thought, understand its true significance, and take account of all its import.

The text of this passage can be translated somewhat as follows (p. 29, line 23, to p. 30, line 15):

The activity (*Tätigkeit*) of separation (*Scheidens*) is the force and the work of the *understanding* (*Verstandes*), [that is] of the power (*Macht*) [which is] the-most-worthy-of-awe (*verwundersamsten*) and the greatest [of all], or better still, [of the] absolute [power]. The circle which is at

rest [by being] closed in itself and which holds (*hält*) its constitutive-elements (*Momente*) as [does a] substance is immediate relationship (*Verhältnis*) and consequently not at all (*nicht*) worthy-of-awe. But [the fact] that the accidental (*Akzidentelle*) as such separated from its periphery (*Umfange*), [that] the entity-which-is-bound (*Gebundene*) and which is objectively-real only in its connection (*Zusammenhang*) with something-else, achieves an empirical-existence (*Dasein*) of its own and a separate-or-isolated (*abgesonderte*) freedom, [all that] is [the expression of] the prodigious (*ungeheure*) power of the Negative; it is the energy of thought (*Denkens*), of the pure abstract-Ego (*Ichs*). Death – if we wish so to call that unreality (*Unwirklichkeit*) – is what-there-is-that-is-most-terrible (*Furchtbarste*), and to sustain [*maintenir*] death is what requires the greatest force. Powerless beauty hates the understanding, because it [the understanding] demands (*zumuter*) this of it; which it [beauty] is not capable of. Now the life of the Spirit is not [that] life which shudders (*scheut*) before death and [merely] protects itself (*rein bewahrt*) from wasting-away (*Verwüstung*), but [it is] that [life] which supports death and conserves (*erhält*) itself in it. Spirit achieves its truth only in finding itself in absolute rending (*Zerrissenheit*). It [Spirit] is not this [prodigious] power by being the Positive which turns away (*wegsieht*) from the Negative, as when we say of something: this is nothing or [this is] false, and having [thus] got rid of it (*damit fertig*), we pass on therefrom to something else; no, Spirit is that power only to the extent that it contemplates the Negative full in the face (*ins Angesicht schaut*) [and] abides (*verweilt*) with it. This abiding-with [*séjour-prolongé*] (*Verweilen*) is the magical-force (*Zauberkraft*) which transposes (*umkehrt*) the Negative into given-Being (*sein*). This [power of Spirit, or this magical-force] is the same thing as what we called above the Subject, which, by giving in its [own] element an empirical-existence to specific-determination, dialectically suppresses (*aufhebt*) abstract Immediateness (*Unmittelbarkeit*), that is [an Immediateness] only *existing-as-a-given-being* in general (*nur überhaupt seiende*), and [which] is precisely thereby [*par cela même*] true-or-genuine [*vraie-ou-véritable*] (*wahrhafte*) Substance, [that is] given-Being or Immediateness which does not have Mediation (*Vermittlung*) outside it, but which is itself that Mediation.

In order to understand the somewhat enigmatic beginning of this passage, [which is] otherwise perfectly clear and univocal, we must have the following before our minds.

Philosophy is the search for Wisdom, and Wisdom is the fullness of self-consciousness. By aspiring to and in laying claim to Wisdom, Hegel intends therefore, in the last analysis, to take account of himself and to give an accounting of his self [*se rendre compte et rendre compte de soi*]:

[an account, that is,] of what he is and of what he does. Now his activity, the one to which his truly human existence reduces itself, is that of a philosopher or of a Wise Man [*un Sage*], who reveals by his discourse the being that he himself is and [also the being] that he is not. In philosophizing, Hegel must therefore above all give an account of his own philosophical discourse. Now in [the course of] observing this discourse, Hegel notes that we have here not a question of some passive given, but [rather that it is a matter] of the result of an 'activity' which can be called a 'labour' [*travail*] and which requires a great 'force', provided by what he calls here the 'Understanding'. He declares therefore that the Understanding is a 'power', and he says that it is truly 'worthy of awe'.

It is apparent that 'Understanding' signifies here what is truly and specifically human in Man, because it is the faculty of discourse that distinguishes him from animals and from things. It is also what is essential in every philosopher, whoever he may be, and therefore in Hegel himself. The whole question is to know what it is. Hegel tells us that the Understanding (= Man) is an 'absolute power', which manifests itself in and through 'the activity of *separation*', or even better, as [the] 'act-of-*separating*' (*Scheiden*). But why does he say that?

He says it because the activity of the Understanding, that is human thought, is essentially *discursive*. Man does not reveal instantaneously, as in a lightning-flash, the totality of the real: he does not grasp that totality in one single concept-word. He reveals one by one, by isolated words or partial discourses, the elements constitutive of the totality, by *separating* them from it in order to be able to do so; and it is only the sum-total of his discourse, extended in time, that can reveal the total, indeed the simultaneous, reality. Now in fact, these elements are *inseparable* from the whole that they constitute, by [virtue of] being bound up among themselves by spatial and temporal, namely, material, interconnections, which are indissoluble. Their *separation* is therefore indeed a 'miracle', and the power that effects it well merits being called 'absolute'.

The absolute force or power of Understanding that Hegel had in mind was in the final analysis nothing but the power or force of *abstraction* that we find in Man.

Whenever we describe any isolated object, we abstract from the rest of the universe. In speaking of 'this table' or of 'this dog', for example, we speak of them as though they were alone in the world. Now in fact, as real things, the dog and the table occupy at a given moment quite determinate places in the real World, and they cannot be separated from what surrounds them. But man, who isolates them through his thought, can, in that thought, [re-]combine them as he sees fit. He can, for example, place this dog under this table, even if in fact they are separated at this very moment by a distance of a thousand kilometres. Now this

power that thought has to separate and recombine things is in effect 'absolute', because no real force of connection or repulsion is sufficiently powerful to oppose it. And that power is not at all fictitious or 'ideal'. For it is in separating and in recombining things in and through his discursive thought that man forms his technical projects, which, once realized through work, really transform the aspect of the natural [and] given World by creating therein a World of culture.

Generally speaking, when we create the *concept* of a real entity, we detach it from its *hic et nunc*. The concept of a thing is that thing itself as [*en tant que*] detached from its given *hic et nunc*. Thus, the concept 'this dog' differs in no respect from the real concrete dog to which it is 'related', except that this dog is here and now, while its concept is everywhere and nowhere, always and never. Now, to detach an entity from its *hic et nunc* is to separate it from its 'material' support, [which is] determined in a univocal manner by the rest of the given spatio-temporal universe, of which that entity is a part. That is why that entity can be altered or 'simplified' as we wish, after it has become a concept. It is thus that this real dog is, as concept, not only 'this dog', but beyond that [it is, as concept] 'any dog' [*un chien quelconque*], 'dog in general', 'quadruped', 'animal' etc., and even simply 'Being'. And once again that power of *separation*, which is at the source of [all] the sciences, arts and crafts, is an 'absolute' power, against which nature can oppose no effective resistance.

It is not correct, however, to say that the real entity [which has] become a concept is situated outside time and space. Aristotle was right in pointing out that the Platonic 'Ideas' exist only in 'material' spatial and temporal things, of which they are the 'essences' or 'entelechies'. The absolute power of the Understanding goes so far as to *separate* an 'essence' from its natural support: the essence 'dog' is separated from this dog that runs and barks here and now. But it cannot transport it [the essence] into a world [that is] so to speak 'hyper-celestial', beyond space-time. Once detached from its natural support, the 'essence' becomes 'meaning' or 'Idea'. But the 'meaning' does not float in the void: it is necessarily the meaning of a *word* or of a *discourse* – [words or discourses] pronounced, written or only thought, but existing always in the midst of the spatial and temporal world. The concept is not an 'Idea' or a 'meaning' [merely], but [it is rather] a *word*-having-a-meaning, or a coherent *discourse* (Logos). Thus, the absolute power of the Understanding does not *separate* the essence-Idea from its natural support except to attach it, as meaning-Idea, to the specific support of a discourse that is itself also [something] here and now (since it is a discourse-endowed-with-a-meaning only to the extent that it is comprehended by some *concrete man*).

But it remains no less the case that the *separation* of the 'essence' from

its *natural* support is not an event that takes place spontaneously in the midst of nature, but [rather it is] the result of an 'activity' of the 'Understanding', or of a 'labour' that requires a 'force' endowed with an 'absolute power'. Now we can indeed say, with Hegel, that this power is 'worthy of awe' and that the principal task of philosophy or of Science is to take account of it.

But the philosophical precursors of Hegel went amiss in [their attempts at] responding to the question posed, [and] in explaining the miracle in question. They saw and posed the problem wrongly. They spoke of the 'Subject' in general or of 'Thought' as such, in asking themselves how and why Being is also concept, that is [by asking] why and how it can have a *meaning*; but they forgot to say that there are also discourses endowed with a meaning, [words] that men speak, write or think in space and time. By thus simplifying the problem they arrived, to be sure, at a result. Parmenides affirms the identity of Being and Thought; Aristotle speaks of a Being that thinks itself eternally in its totality; Spinoza, taking his inspiration from Descartes and [in turn] inspiring Schelling, says that Thought is an attribute of Substance. Hegel does not contest this result of the philosophy that preceded his own. He says only that the relationship between Being and Thought which that [preceding] philosophy had in view was nothing very remarkable. In order truly to give an account of the relationship in question, it would have sufficed to identify, with Hegel, Concept and Time; or, what is the same thing, to affirm the *temporality* of Being itself. For the *concept*, or more precisely the *meaning* of Being, differs in no respect from Being itself, except for the absence, in the *meaning*, of the *being* of that Being. And the same holds for the meaning of any thing that *is*, since Being is the integration of *all* that *is*, in such a way that the meaning 'Being' is an integration of all meanings in general. The *essence*-meaning of a thing is, as we say, that very thing minus its *existence*. Now the 'subtraction' that removes the being from Being is nothing other than Time, which makes Being pass from the present, in which it *is*, into the past, in which it *is not* (is no more), and in which it is therefore only pure *meaning* (or essence without existence). And since this is no *new* Being that *is* in the present, but [rather only] an 'old' or *past* Being, we can say that Being is an essence that has acquired [an] existence; or, what is the same thing, [we can say] that the being is not Being solely, but [also] Concept; or, what is again the same thing, [we can say] that Being has a *meaning* to the very extent that it *is* (as Time). In the same way, since it is the same past Being that is in the present and will be in the future (or, *not being* as yet, it is also essence without existence), we can say that Being has a *goal* (this goal, which is the transformation of the future into the present or the grant of existence to essence, which is besides nothing but the transformation of the present into the past, that is of Being into Concept): [all of] which

we can express also by saying that the very being of Being has a meaning; or, what is the same thing [we can say] that Being has a *raison d'être* (that *raison* being the thought of being by Being [*la pensée de l'être par l'Être*]). Thus, if Being and Time are but one, we can say that Being coincides with Thought, that it thinks itself eternally, and that Thought is the attribute of its Substance or, if we prefer, [that Thought is] its 'goal'.

Hegel himself would also agree to putting it that way. Except that for him, this relationship between Being and Thought in the midst of the 'sphere' of Parmenides, or of the Aristotelian 'Circle' (which Hegel evokes in the text cited), or [in the midst] of the Spinozan and Schellingian 'Substance' (of which he speaks as well) [– Hegel would insist that this relationship] has nothing 'miraculous' about it. For this relationship is 'immediate', says Hegel. Now 'immediate' signifies, in Hegel, 'natural', or 'given'. And in fact *this* relationship presupposes no 'activity', no 'labour', no 'force' or 'power'. For there the 'essence' is not *separated* from its 'natural' support: the essence of Being subsists in Being itself and in it alone, in the same way as the essence of the dog subsists uniquely in the dog (and that is why there cannot be tables, for example, in *this* Being – that is, [there cannot be any] *artifacts*). There is here neither action nor labour nor power, because given Being remains as it is given, in its immutable identity with itself.

What is 'miraculous', on the contrary, is precisely the *separation* that the Understanding effects. For it [the separation] is effectively 'against nature'. Without the intervention of the Understanding, the essence 'dog' would exist only in and through real dogs, which would in return determine it in a univocal manner by their very existence. And that is why we can say that the relationship between the dog and the essence 'dog' is 'natural' or 'immediate'. But when, thanks to the absolute power of the Understanding, the essence becomes meaning and is incarnated in a *word*, there is no longer any 'natural' relationship between it and its support; otherwise, words that have nothing in common among them in so far as [they are] phonetic or graphic spatio-temporal realities, whatever they may be ('dog', *chien*, *Hund* etc.), [otherwise these words] could not serve as support for one sole and self-same essence, having all one single and very-same meaning. There has been, therefore, a *negation* here of the given as given (with its 'natural' relationships between essence and existence); that is [there has been] *creation* (of concepts or of word-having-a-meaning, which as words have nothing to do, by themselves, with the meaning that is incarnate in them); in other words [there has been] *action* or *labour*.

Now if the traditional conception of [the conjunction] Being-Thought takes account of the *possibility* of a discourse revealing the meaning of what is, by explaining how and why Being has meaning, it does not say

how and why discourse becomes *real*, that is how and why we manage in fact to 'disengage the meaning from the being' and to incarnate it in a collection of words that have nothing in common with that meaning and that have been created out of whole cloth with an eye to that incarnation. Now it is precisely the reality of discourse that is the miracle that philosophy must explain.

What is miraculous, says Hegel, is the fact that some thing that is really *inseparable* from [some] other thing achieves nevertheless a *separate* existence; or better yet – that a simple attribute or 'accident' becomes an *autonomous* reality.

Now the essence is a 'bound-entity', [tied] to its support, and it is 'objectively-real only in its connection with something-other' than itself, that is with its support. Nevertheless, the Understanding succeeds in *separating* the essence from its natural support and procures for it 'an empirical-existence of its own' by incarnating it in a spoken, written or thought word or discourse. And that 'empirical-existence' of its own of the essence that has become meaning is also its 'separated-or-isolated freedom'. For the meaning embodied in the word and in discourse is no longer subject to the necessity that rules essences bound to their respective natural supports [that are] determined in a univocal manner by their *hic et nunc*. Thus, for example, the meaning embodied in the word 'dog' can continue to subsist even after dogs have disappeared from the earth; it can (by being transmitted by radio, for example) overcome obstacles [that would be] insurmountable for a real dog; it [the word] can be placed where there would be no room for the latter [the real dog]; and so forth. And it is this 'separated freedom' and the 'absolute power' from which it flows that condition the possibility of *error*, for which pre-Hegelian philosophers could never account. For this 'Freedom' allows the meaning embodied in words to be combined otherwise than the corresponding essences, bound to their natural supports, would be.

It is this 'activity', capable of *disengaging* the meaning from Being, of *separating* essence from existence and of embodying the meaning-essence in discourse [– it is this] that is the miracle for which philosophy (or more precisely, Science and Wisdom) is supposed to account. And it was in [the course of] seeking to account for it that Hegel discovered (or made precise) the fundamental (ontological) category of *Negativity*, which he calls here the 'Negative' [*le 'Négatif'*], or the 'negative-or-negate-ive-entity' [*l'entité-négative-ou-négatrice*]. This Negativity is 'the energy of thought', which disengages the meaning from Being by separating essence from existence. It [this Negativity] is what is 'the energy of the pure abstract-Ego' engendering 'thought', that is the Understanding and its discourse. Now whatever people may sometimes have said, discourse does not fall from heaven, and it does not float in the void, 'above the waters'. If it [that is discourse] expresses a 'thought' that belongs properly

to an 'Ego', this Ego has necessarily an empirical-existence in the natural spatio-temporal World, being a *human* Ego. What is an 'abstract-Ego' (*Ich*) on the ontological level (this Ego being the form under which Negativity subsists in Identity or in given-Being) is the human 'personal-Ego' (*Selbst*) on the metaphysical level: it is the Man who 'appears', on the phenomenological level, as a free historical *speaking* individual.

The miracle of the existence of discourse, of which philosophy must render an account, is therefore nothing else than the miracle of the existence of Man in the world. And as a matter of fact we can apply to Man himself the passage from Hegel that I have [heretofore] interpreted in reference to Discourse. For Man is *also* a 'bound-being' that is 'objectively-real only in its connection with something-else': he is nothing without the animal that serves him as support, and he is pure nothingness outside the natural World. Yet nevertheless he *separates* himself from this World and *opposes* himself to it. He creates [for] himself 'an empirical-existence of his own', essentially different from every purely natural empirical existence. And he acquires [for] himself 'a separate-or-isolated freedom', which permits him to move and to act completely differently from the way in which the animal that incarnates him would have moved and acted, if that animal did not incarnate Negativity and were not therefore an Ego who thinks and who speaks. Endowed with an 'absolute power', which becomes in him an effective 'force; [which is] 'worthy of awe', Man produces, in [or through] 'activity', or a 'labour' [which is] rational or penetrated by the 'Understanding', a real World contrary-to-nature, created by his 'separated freedom' for his *own* 'empirical-existence' – the technical or cultural, social or historical World.

Therefore, just like the discourses that he utters, Man is not a *given-Being*, nor [is he] the 'accident' of a 'Substance'. He is the *result* of effort by an absolute *power*, and he is that power itself: he is *Negativity* incarnate, or, as Hegel says, 'negative-or-negate-ive-entity' (*das Negative*). It is only by comprehending Man as Negativity that we [can] comprehend him in his 'miraculous' human specificity, making of him an Ego who thinks and speaks, or who 'separates' the essence from its natural or given 'connection' with existence.

We know, besides, that on the ontological level, Negativity is actualized as negative or creative *Act* (in order to subsist as 'abstract-Ego'). We also know that on the metaphysical level 'the *true being* of Man is *his action*', and that it is in it alone that 'Individuality is *objectively-real*' (*Phenomenology*, p. 236, lines 25–6). And we know, finally, that on the phenomenological level it is through the action of the *struggle* that Man 'manifests' himself for the first time in the World of natural 'phenomena', and that it is in consequence of the action of *labour* that Understanding 'appears' in this World with his thought and his words.³

Now Negativity, taken in isolation, is pure Nothingness (on the onto-

logical level). This Nothingness nihilates as [the] Action (of the abstract-Ego) in Being. But Action nihilates by annihilating this Being, and therefore [also] by annihilating itself, since without Being it is only Nothingness. Negativity therefore is no other thing than the *finitude* of Being, or the presence in it of a genuine future, which will never be its present; and Action [therefore] is essentially *finite*. That is why (on the metaphysical level) the historical World, created by Action, has necessarily a beginning and an end. And the entity that is Action in its very being 'appears' (on the phenomenological level) to itself and to others as irremediably *mortal*.

That is why, in the text cited, Hegel can call *Death* the 'unreality' that Negativity or the 'negative-or-negate-ive-entity' is. But if Man is Action, and if Action is Negativity 'appearing' as Death, [then] Man is, in his human or speaking existence, only a *death*: [a death] more or less deferred, and conscious of itself.

Therefore: to render an account, philosophically, of Discourse, or of Man as speaking, is to accept without flinching the fact of death, and to describe, on the three philosophical levels [i.e. the onotological, metaphysical and phenomenological], its significance and import. Now that is precisely what philosophers before Hegel had omitted doing.

Hegel was not surprised at this. For he knew that death 'is what is most terrible' and that acceptance of death is 'what requires the greatest force'. He says that the Understanding requires that acceptance. For the Understanding, through its discourse, reveals the real and reveals itself. And since it [the Understanding] is born of finitude, it is only by thinking death and by speaking of it that it is truly what it is: discourse conscious of itself and of its origin. But Hegel knows also that 'powerless beauty' is incapable of bowing to the requirements of the Understanding. The aesthete, the romantic [and] the mystic flee the [very] idea of death and speak of Nothingness itself as of something that is.

Now, says Hegel, the 'life of the Spirit' is not that [sort of life] 'which shudders before death and preserves itself from wasting away, but [rather it is] that [sort of life] which supports death and maintains itself in it'. The point is that Spirit is Being revealed by speech [*la parole*], and the life of the Spirit is the existence of the philosopher or of the Wise Man [*le Sage*], conscious of the World and of itself. Now it is only in becoming conscious of his finitude, and therefore of his death, that man truly becomes conscious of himself. For he is finite and mortal.

In addition, Spirit 'achieves its truth only by finding itself in absolute rending'. For once again, Spirit is the Real revealed by Discourse. Now Discourse is born in the Man who opposes himself to nature, or who negates – in Struggle – the given animal that he is himself, and through Labour, the natural World that is given to him. It is from this 'rending' of the Real into Man and nature that the Understanding and its Discourse

are born, which reveal the Real and thus transform it into Spirit. This *opposition*, this conflict between Man and the given Real, manifests itself first by the *erroneous* character of human revelatory [*révélateur*] discourse, and it is only at the end of times, at the termination of History, that the discourse of the Wise Man *re-joins* reality. For it is [only] then that we can say that 'the Spirit re-discovers itself', and that it 'achieves its truth', which is the adequate revelation of reality. But it rediscovers itself only in and through that 'rending' [*déchirement*] that is manifested in the many forms of error in the course of the historical process. And this process is that of a series of generations that follow each other, that are born, therefore, and [that] die, in time.

It is death that engenders Man in nature, and it is death that makes him progress to his final destiny, which is that of the Wise Man fully conscious of himself and therefore fully conscious of his own finitude. Thus, Man does not arrive at Wisdom or at the fullness of self-consciousness so long as, in the way of the vulgar, he feigns an ignorance of the Negativity that is the very source of his human existence, and that is manifest in him and to him, not only as struggle and labour, but moreover as death or absolute finitude. The vulgar treat death as something of which one says: 'It is nothing, or it is false'; and by turning away from it most quickly, they hasten to pass on to the order of the day.⁴ But if the philosopher wants to attain to Wisdom, he must 'look the Negative full in the face, and [must] abide with it'. And it is in discursive contemplation of Negativity revealing itself through death that the 'power' of the Wise Man, conscious of himself, [and] who incarnates Spirit, is manifested. Hegel says that it is this 'abiding' with the Negative that is 'the magical force that transposes the Negative into given-Being'. He alludes, in saying that, to what is, according to him, the birth of Man in the World.⁵ For it is in the Struggle [to the death, for pure prestige], that the power of the Negative manifests itself [*se mani-feste*] through the voluntary acceptance of the risk of life (the Master) or through the anguish inspired by the conscious apparition of death (the Slave), [it is only in the Struggle] that Man creates his human being, by thus transforming, as if by 'magic', the Nothingness that he is and that is manifest to him and through him as death, into a negative *existence*, of the warrior and of the labourer, creators [both,] of History. It is this 'abiding' with death that *real-izes* Negativity and inserts it into the natural World in the form human *being*. And it is by taking up again, in his discourse, this anthropogenetic contact [*ce contact anthropogène*] with death, that the Wise Man transforms the *nothingness* of an *erroneous* description of Man into the revealed *being* that *truth* is.

This 'magical force', Hegel continues, is what he previously (p. 19) called the 'Subject', or the 'abstract-Ego' of the 'Understanding'. That is to say that thought and the discourse that reveals the Real are born of

the negative Action that real-izes Nothingness by nullifying Being – the given-being of Man in the Struggle, and the given-being of nature through Labour (which results, moreover, from the real contact with death in the Struggle). This is to say, therefore, that the human being itself is no other thing than that Action; he is [a] death that lives a human life.

The being of man, being thus, if we wish, a deferred death, or an affirmation of Nothingness through the negation of the given – or better yet, *creation* – is not therefore a *given-being*; he is not, like the natural being, the 'immediacy *which-exists-as-a-given-being*'. On the contrary, he exists humanly only to the extent that he 'dialectically-suppresses' or 'mediates' that natural 'immediacy' through negative Action. That 'immediacy' has 'mediation outside itself', for it is *Man* who negates or transforms nature by his labour and in his Struggles, and it is *human* discourse that reveals it. Man, on the contrary, negates *himself*; it is he *himself* who creates and transforms himself; he is *himself* the 'mediation' of given-being through active, and therefore discursive or revelatory, negation. And that is why Man is unique in being a being who reveals Being and who is conscious of *himself*. Or, what is the same thing, the human being, to the extent that he implies the consciousness of and the will of his [own] death, is a being 'mediated' by Negation – that is a *dialectical* being.

Such is the meaning of the cited passage from the Preface to the *Phenomenology*. Interpreted on the ontological level, this passage signifies that it is not the (infinite) *Totality* of Being (or the One-which-is) that reveals itself to itself, but that this Totality is revealed by one of its (limited) *parts*, which also reveals itself. Metaphysically speaking, the passage signifies that Spirit, that is the Being that reveals itself to itself, is not God, but Man-in-the-World. For the part [of Being] that reveals Being is the *human*, essentially *finite*, being, who creates himself in time through the active negation of Being, and who, being Negation or Negativity, annihilates himself after having *endured*. And this revelation of Being by the temporal and temporary human being is a *discursive* or 'dialectical' revelation, which unfolds itself in the time in which it was born and in which it will one day disappear. In this discursive revelation, the human being *relates himself* to the totality of given-Being, first through negative *action* and the *erroneous* discourse that flows from it, but finally through the *adequate* discourse that is born of the passive *contemplation* of the Wise Man who, being 'satisfied' by given-Being, ceases to negate it, transform it, and to 'disfigure' it, even if this be only in his discourse.

And it is a curious thing, a thing that Hegel does not say in the cited passage, but that follows from the whole of his System: this 'satisfaction' (*Befriedigung*) of the Wise Man, which presupposes his perfect awareness of the World and of himself, does not itself attain its perfection and fullness except in and through the awareness of death.

In effect, Man can be satisfied only in being *aware* of his satisfaction, that is *aware of himself* as satisfied. Now if Man is essentially finite, he cannot be fully aware of himself except by taking cognizance of his death. It is therefore only by knowing himself to be irremediably *mortal* that the Wise Man can attain the fullness of satisfaction.

Looking at the matter more closely, we realize that this ultimate consequence of Hegelianism is psychologically less paradoxical than it seems at first glance. To be sure, the idea of death does not add to the *well-being* of man; it does not make him *happy*, and procures no *pleasure* for him, or any *joy*. But it is unique in being able to *satisfy his pride*, that is in being able to procure for him precisely that 'satisfaction' that Hegel has in mind. For Hegelian 'satisfaction' is nothing else than the full satisfaction of the human and anthropogenetic desire for Recognition (*Anerkennen*) of man's desire to see all other men attribute an absolute value to his *free historical individuality* or to his *personhood* [*personnalité*]. Now it is only by being, and by feeling to be, mortal or finite – that is by existing and feeling himself to exist, in a universe without a beyond and without a God – that Man can affirm and make known his liberty, his historicity and his individuality, [all] 'unique in the world'.

The cited passage from the Preface to the *Phenomenology* puts fully in evidence the decisive role that the idea of death plays in the philosophy of Hegel. I would like, nevertheless, to cite a series of other texts that make possible [a further] precision of the Hegelian notion of death. For various reasons, however, I will draw them only from the *Phenomenology* and from earlier writings.

The theme of death appeared already in the fragment on love of 1795, translated in Appendix I (see above, pp. 510ff.).‡

In this fragment love appeared to Hegel as what there is that is most human in man; the 'lover' is man viewed as human being. Hegel underlines the essential difference that subsists between the death of man and the [mere] 'ending' or 'corruption' of a purely natural being; he speaks of a plant – but he could just as well have spoken of an animal or of an inanimate thing. The difference resides in the fact that the end of the natural being is determined by the general laws of nature, that it is imposed in some manner from without by the rest of the universe, by what is 'foreign' to the finite being itself. In contrast, the death of man must therefore be understood as an end that is 'immanent' or 'autonomous', that is voluntary or willed, and hence, [as] conscious.

In addition, Hegel says that man is *individual* only to the extent that he is mortal. If Spirit (which is called love here) were infinite or immortal, it would be rigorously one. If Spirit realizes itself as multiple, in the form of human beings who differ from one another and of whom each lives

an individual life that is his own – [if this be so] it is solely because the human or ‘spiritual’ beings, namely, the ‘lovers’, are mortal.

In the same way, the ‘autonomy’ or the *freedom* of the human being is linked to death. To say of a being that it is ‘autonomous’ is to say that it is mortal.

Finally, the same fragment also contains the idea of the historical survival of man in the here-below. Men are separated and annihilated definitively in and through death; but they live humanly and remain socially united in and through their children (thanks to education and the historical tradition, as we shall see later). The child implies and presupposes the death of the parents; but in spite of the ‘negation’ that separates them, there is [an] ‘identity’ between the generations that succeed each other. And that [identity] is precisely what we call History. Or, if we prefer, it [this process] is the ‘total’, ‘synthetic’ or ‘dialectical’ existence of the human being in which the thesis of the ‘united’ (Identity) and the antithesis of the ‘separated’ (Negativity) coincide in the synthesis of the ‘re-united’ (Totality). The *historicity* (or the dialecticity) of Man is therefore inseparably bound to the fact of his death.

All the principal themes of the Hegelian philosophy of death are found therefore already in one of his first writings. And all these themes will be taken up again, rendered more precise, and developed, in the later writings.

The theme of the essential difference between the death of man – which is death properly so called – and the death-corruption of a merely living being is taken up again in the Introduction to the *Phenomenology*.

Hegel says this there (p. 69, lines 12–16):

What is limited to a natural life cannot by itself go-beyond (*hinausgehen*) its immediate [or given] empirical-existence (*Dasein*); but it is driven beyond (*hinausgetrieben*) this existence by something-else [than itself], and this fact-of-being-wrested[and-projected]-beyond (*Hinausgerissenwerden*) is its death.

Once again the ‘end’ of the natural being is presented as an exterior law passively submitted to. The natural being is essentially ‘given’, that is ‘static’, or ‘identical’ to itself: any radical change, which is something other than the ‘development’ of its given or innate ‘nature’, is imposed on it from outside and signifies its annihilation. Man, on the contrary, can spontaneously transcend himself and can go by himself beyond his ‘innate nature’, even while remaining what he is, that is a *human* being. But for the animal that serves him as support, that transcendence signifies death. However, in the *human* animal that death is no longer exterior: he is himself (as) man the cause of his death (as animal). It is only this ‘autonomous’ or ‘spontaneous’ death that can be conscious and also freely

accepted or willed (the risk of life). And it is [this conscious dying] alone that is truly human, humanizing or anthropogenetic.

Being a negate-ive being, man would be able to go beyond himself indefinitely, without ceasing to be Man, without having need of becoming a 'Super-man' [un 'Sur-homme']. It is only the end of the anthropophoric *animal* that puts a terminus to human self-transcendence. That is why the death of man is always in some way premature and violent, in contrast to the 'natural' death of animals and plants, which have completed the cycle of their evolution. And that is also why human transcendence can be realized as a single and unique History, despite (or because of) the succession of generations, which remain absolutely separated from each other in the plant and animal realm.

Hegel says it in his *Jena Lectures* of 1803–4 (Vol. XIX, last sentence of note 4 [on p. 222])§

The individuals are first of all themselves this death in-the-way-of-becoming (*werdende*) . . . but in their act-of-becoming-dead (*Totwerden*) they contemplate at the same time their act-of-becoming-alive. The [human] infant is not, as in the animal relationship, the existent kind [*genre*], but the parents [recognizing themselves in him . . .].

As we shall see again, it is the self-negate-ive act, that is [an act that is] free and historical, interrupted by the death of the animal that incarnated it, which prolongs it, which achieves and perfects itself in and through the infant educated or created as human through that very act.

But man would not have been able to negate himself or to transcend himself if he were not finite or mortal. The humanity of man *presupposes* therefore the finitude of the animal that incarnates him, and consequently it presupposes the death of the man himself. And on the other hand, man also *provokes* the death of the animal by transcending, through negate-ive action, his given 'nature': in the extreme case, he risks his life and has himself killed without a valid biological reason. We can therefore say that man is a mortal *sickness* of the animal.

And Hegel actually says so.

We find the following passages in the *Lectures* of 1803–4:

To the extent that the universal system raises the animal at the interior of itself up to the point at which its universal-entity is fixed by opposition (*gegen*) to its difference [which distinguishes it from all that is not it], exists for itself [and] does not coincide with that difference, it is *sickness* which is posited, in which the animal would [go] beyond itself. [But] to the extent that it cannot organize the universal-entity for itself, without relating it to the animal process . . . it does no more than to pass into its death [Vol. XIX, p. 174, lines 28–35]. With sickness

the animal passes beyond the limit of its nature; but the sickness of the animal is the becoming of the Spirit. *In sickness, the universality . . . has isolated itself*; which is what . . . can end only with death [Vol. XIX, p. 186, lines 12–15 and 18]. The fixed universality of sickness only nullifies the infinitude of opposition (*Gegensatzes*) and [it] transforms itself (*geht über*) in death; the universality of Spirit [on the contrary] acts in such a way that the opposition is maintained (*bestehen*), to the extent that that universality has dialectically suppressed (*aufgehoben*) opposition in itself [Vol. XIX, p. 189, lines 4–7].

Sickness and the death of the animal are but an abortive attempt at self-transcendence. Sickness is a discord between the animal and the rest of the natural world; the sick animal is, so to speak, dislodged from its 'natural place' (*topos*), from the *hic et nunc* that fixes its particularity and distinguishes it from everything that is not it. Now to detach [something] from the *hic et nunc* is to universalize [it], to transform [it] into a *general* notion or [into] a concept. But the animal is absolutely determined by its *topos*. To dislodge it therefrom is to nullify it, is to render it sick unto death. For in contrast to Man, the animal cannot 'organize the universal in itself, without relating it to the animal process': to put it another way, it [the animal] cannot develop the particular entity that has become a concept by its detachment from its given *hic et nunc* into a universe of discourse (which it will transform by action into a real technical and historical real world). But Man can do so only because the animal that incarnates him is susceptible of being dislodged from its *topos* by sickness and death.

It is through sickness that the animal tries in some way to transcend its given 'nature'. It does not succeed in this because that transcendence is equivalent, for it, to its nullification. But the success of Man presupposes that attempt, and this is why the sickness that leads to the death of the animal is 'the becoming of the Spirit' or of Man. (Spirit is not therefore an eternal and perfect God who incarnates himself, but a sick and mortal animal who transcends himself in time.)

The universality that manifests itself as sickness is 'fixed'; which is to say that it is not synthetic, total or dialectical. It simply destroys the 'opposition' of the Particular and the Universal by nullifying the particularity of the animal in and through death. The 'universality of the Spirit', by contrast, i.e. that [universality] that manifests itself as human existence, maintains the opposition of the Particular and the Universal, by 'dialectically suppressing' these opposites, that is by synthesizing them in the totality of Individuality. For the *universality* of discourse and of rational action is effectuated in and through the *particularity* of a human individual. But once again, this free historical individuality presupposes

the *opposition* of the Particular and the Universal, which is manifested as the sickness and death of animality, which is also that of Man.

That's why Hegel can say, in the *Jena Lectures* of 1805–6 (Vol. XX, p. 164, lines 8–9):||

The animal dies. [But the] death of the animal [is the] coming to be of [human] consciousness.

In short, Man is the mortal sickness of nature. And that is why, being necessarily a part of nature, he is himself essentially mortal.

In the writings of his youth, Hegel attached the *freedom*, the *historicity* and the *individuality* of Man to death. And this triple theme is also taken up again and made precise in his later writings.

Let us consider, first of all, *freedom*.

In many instances Hegel identifies freedom and Negativity. He does so in a particularly clear way in the *System of Morality* (of 1802?) in which he writes, for example, this:

The negative-entity (*das Negative*), which is to say (*oder*) freedom, which is to say crime [Title of §2; Vol. VII, p. 450] [p. 446]. That negative-entity, or pure freedom, undertakes (*geht auf*) therefore the dialectical-suppression (*Aufhebung*) of the objective-entity in such a way (so), that it . . . makes of the negative-entity the essential-reality (*Wesen*), negates, as a consequence, reality in its [given] specific-determination (*Bestimmtheit*), but fixes that negation [Vol. VII, p. 452, lines 28–32] [p. 448, lines 28–32].¶

Freedom, which is the realization and the manifestation of Negativity, consists therefore in the act of negating the real in its given structure and in maintaining the negation in the form of a work [*œuvre*] created by that active negation itself. And that freedom, which is Negativity, is the 'essential-reality' of Man.

But Negativity taken in itself is no other thing than Nothingness, which can 'manifest' itself as death. And Hegel consistently says so in many instances.

Thus for example in the *Lectures* of 1805–6, where he writes in a marginal note (Vol. XX, p. 166, the last three lines of note 2):

Its result: *death*, pure *Negativity*, immediate *Non-being*.

If therefore, on the one hand, freedom is Negativity, and if on the other hand, Negativity is Nothingness and death, there is no freedom without death, and only a mortal being can be free. We can even say that death is the final and authentic 'manifestation' of freedom.

Now Hegel by no means shrinks before that consequence; he expressly accepts it, as is shown for example in the following passages, drawn from the *System of Morality* of 1802 and from the *Lectures* of 1803–4:

This negative Absolute, pure freedom, is in its appearance-or-manifestation (*Erscheinung*) – death; and through the faculty (*Fähigkeit*) of death the Subject demonstrates (*erweist*) itself as free and as absolutely raised above all constraint (*Zwang*). The Subject is the absolute act-of-constraining (*Bezwungung*); and because this act is absolute . . . it is the concept of itself, therefore infinite, and the opposite (*Gegenteil*) of itself, that is absolute; and the pure Particularity which is in death, is its proper opposite, [that is] Universality. There is therefore freedom in the act-of-constraining only through the fact that it has for its end (*geht auf*) purely the dialectical-suppression of a [given] specific-determination . . . and therefore through the fact that this act, considered in itself, behaves (*sich hält*) in a purely negative (*rein negativ*) manner [Vol. VII, p. 370, lines 10–14, 20–5, 27–8] [p. 366, lines 30–4; p. 33, line 39–p. 361 line 4; p. 367, lines 7–8] . . . the supreme abstraction of freedom, that is the relationship of constraint (*Bezwingens*) pushed unto its dialectical-suppression, that is free violent death [Vol. VII, p. 389, lines 17–19] [p. 385, lines 16–19].* *This simple abs[olute] point of Consciousness* [= Man] is the absolute-being (*absolutsein*) of the latter, but [taken] as a negative-or-negate-ive-entity; or [in other words], it is the absolute-being of the individual [taken] as such, as a particular-isolated-entity (*Einzelnen*). It is the freedom of its caprice (*Eigensinns*). The particular (*Einzelne*) can transform itself (*sich machen*) in this point; it can, in-an-absolute-manner, make abstraction of all, abandon all; it cannot be rendered dependent, [it cannot] be held (*gehalten*) by anything; it can detach from itself every specific-determination by which it ought to have been grasped (*gefasst*), and [it can] realize in death its absolute independence and freedom, [it can realize itself therein] as absolutely negative-or-negate-ive Consciousness. But death has in it contradiction in relationship to life [Vol. XIX, p. 218, lines 1–12]. Its [= the particular's] particular-isolated (*einzelne*) freedom is [nothing except] only its caprice, its death [Vol. XIX, p. 232, last line of note 2].

It is therefore indeed death – by which is to be understood a death that is voluntary or accepted in full awareness of what is involved – which is the supreme manifestation of freedom at least of the 'abstract' freedom of the *isolated* individual. Man could not be free if he were not essentially and voluntarily mortal. Freedom is autonomy in the face of the given, that is the possibility of *negating* it such as it is given, and it is solely through voluntary death that a man can escape the confinement of *no*

matter what given (= imposed) condition of existence. If man were not mortal and if he could not give death to himself without 'necessity', he would not escape rigorous determination by the given totality of Being, which in this case would merit being called 'God'.

The essence of individual freedom is therefore Negativity, which manifests itself in its pure or 'absolute' state as death. And this is why, when 'pure' or 'absolute' freedom is realized on the social level, in the course of the second stage of a genuine Revolution – that is [a revolution] negative of the social given – it must necessarily manifest itself as a collective violent death or 'Terror'.

Hegel says so quite clearly in the section of the *Phenomenology* that is devoted to the analysis of Revolution (p. 418, line 37–p. 419, line 5):

The unique work and action of general (*allgemeine*) Freedom are as a consequence *death*; to wit, a *death* which has no compass (*Umfang*) or internal completion-or-accomplishing (*Erfüllung*), for what is negated [in and through this death] is the non-completed-and-accomplished point of the absolutely free personal-Ego (*Selbsts*); it is therefore the coldest death and the most pointless, with no more significance-or-importance than the act of cutting a cabbage in two, or than a gulp of water.

[It is] in the flatness of this syllable [that] consists the wisdom of [revolutionary] government, [it is to it that can be reduced] the understanding [which permits] the general will to be accomplished (*vollbringen*).

In the course of the second stage of the revolution, the revolutionaries who aspire to 'absolute freedom' oppose themselves as isolated particulars to the universal incarnated in the state. They oppose themselves to it absolutely, by wanting to negate the given state in an absolute manner, by annihilating it completely. The state cannot therefore maintain itself, the *general* will cannot be accomplished, except on condition that it negate its 'particulars' in a manner just as absolute as their affirmation of *themselves* is or would be, through the negation of the *universal* realities. And that is why the 'wisdom of the government' manifests itself, in the course of this stage, through the Terror. Now we have seen that death voluntarily faced in a negative struggle is precisely the most authentic realization and manifestation of absolute individual freedom. It is therefore indeed in and through the Terror that this freedom is spread in society, and it cannot be attained in a 'tolerant' state, which does not take its citizens seriously enough to guarantee them their political right to death.

Hegel deduces from these analyses that freedom, being essentially Negativity, can neither be realized in its pure state nor willed for itself.

Absolute freedom (= 'non-conformity') is *pure* Negativity, that is Nothingness and death. Now this latter contradicts life, existence and being itself. Negativity is something, and not Nothingness, only through Being (= Identity), which it *conserves* even while negating it. Negation (of the given) is *real* only as *creation* (of the new) or [as] accomplished work [*œuvre*]. The revolutionary annihilates himself only to the extent that he succeeds in *conserving* his negative work by attaching it to the identity of being, sustained through [*à travers*] its negation by memory or tradition.

That is to say that freedom is *realized* only as History, that man can *be* free only to the extent that he is *historical* (= social, = in a state). But inversely, there is no History except where there is freedom, that is progress or creation, namely, 'revolutionary' negation of the given. And since negative freedom implies and presupposes death, only a mortal being can be truly historical.

But History presupposes death, even apart from the fact that it embodies freedom. There is no History except where there is tradition and historical memory on the one hand, and education and resistance to it on the other. Now all this presupposes a succession of generations *which follow each other*, which come into the world and die in it. For the life of children implies necessarily the *death* of the parents.

Hegel says it with a strange brutality in a marginal note to the *Lectures* of 1805–6 (Vol. XX, p. 202, note 3):

The savages of North America kill their parents; we do the same thing.

To be sure the child *educated* by his parents prolongs their social and political action, which is their very being, and he thus assures to them a 'survival' in the here-below, which is the only 'survival' (albeit limited, in time) that is compatible with freedom. But historical survival conserves the *universality* of individual action, even while nullifying its *particularity*, this nullification being precisely the death of the individual. By educating the child, the parents prepare their own human or historical death, by passing voluntarily from the present to the past.

Hegel says it quite clearly in the *Lectures* of 1803–4 (Vol. XIX, p. 223, lines 18–20, and p. 224, lines 13–22):

In educating the child, the parents place in him their already-formed (*gewordenes*) consciousness, and they engender their death . . . In education, the *unconscious unity* of the child is dialectically suppressed; it is articulated in itself, it becomes a *formed-or-educated consciousness*; the consciousness of the parents is the matter dependent on which it forms-or-educates itself. The parents are for the child an obscure unknown presentiment (*Ahnen*) of itself; they dialectically suppress

the simple-and-individual [and] condensed (*gedrungenes*) being-at-the-interior-of-itself of the child. What they give to him they lose; they die in him; what they give him is their own consciousness. Consciousness is here the becoming of another consciousness in it, and the parents contemplate, in the becoming of the child, their [own] dialectical-suppression (*Aufgehobenwerden*).

History is transcendence (in the here-below). It is the 'dialectical-suppression' of Man, who 'negates' himself (as given) by 'conserving' himself (as a *human* being) and is 'sublimated' (= progress) through his conservative self-negation. And this, 'dialectical-movement' implies and presupposes the finitude of what is 'moved', that is the death of the men who create History.

As finitude or temporality and as negativity or freedom, death is therefore doubly the ultimate basis and the first mover [*mobile*] of History. And that is why the historical process implies necessarily an actualization of death through wars and bloody revolutions.

In the essay on *Natural Right* (of 1802) Hegel affirms resolutely the historical necessity of war (Vol. VII, p. 372, lines 5–8, 16–21, 24–35, and p. 373, lines 21–2) [p. 368, lines 22–6, 33–8; p. 369, lines 1–12, 37–9]:

The positive-aspect (*Positive*) of the absolute form [= Man] is the absolute customary-morality (*Sittliche*), to wit, the habits [*l'appartenance*] of a people [= state], the particular demonstrating (*erweist*) in a non-ambiguous manner [its] union (*Einssein*) with the people only in the negative-aspect, through the danger of death [which implies war]. This relationship (*Beziehung*) of [political] individuality to [political, = state] individuality is a relation (*Verhältnis*), and consequently a double relationship; the one is the positive relationship, the equal [and] tranquil coexistence (*Nebeneinanderbestehen*) of the two in peace – the other is the negative relationship, the exclusion of one individuality by the other; and the two relationships are absolutely necessary. . . . Through this second aspect of the relationship is posited the necessity of war for the concrete-form (*Gestalt*) and the individuality of the customary-moral totality [= the state]. War, [precisely] because there is in it the free possibility not only that isolated-particular specific-determinations might be nullified (*vernichtet*) but [also] their integrity (*Vollständigkeit*) [taken] as life, and this for the Absolute itself, that is for the people [= the state], – [War] preserves the moral (*sittliche*) health of the people in its indifference in the face of specific-determinations and in the face of [their] becoming accustomed to and of the fixation (*Festwerden*) of these latter, in the same way as the movement of the winds preserves the [waters of] lakes from stagnation, to which a prolonged calm would have committed them, just as a prolonged

peace – or even worse (*gar*) eternal [peace] – [would have committed the people to stagnation] . . . – [for] what is [– as Man –] negative-or-negate-ive by its nature [which is Action], must remain negative-or-negate-ory and must not become something fixed-and-stable (*Festes*).

And in the *Lectures* of 1805–6 Hegel insists on the fact that it is indeed the presence of death in wars that makes them the creative agents of History (Vol. XX, p. 261, line 18–p. 262, line 2):

The soldier-condition and war are the objectively real sacrifice of the personal-Self, the danger of death for the particular – this contemplation (*Anschauung*) of its immediate abstract Negativity; in the same-way as war is equally the immediate positive personal-Self of the particular . . . in such a way [that in it] each one, as this particular creates itself (*macht*) as absolute power (*Macht*), contemplates itself as [being] absolutely free, as universal Negativity [existing] for itself really against an other (*Anderes*). It is in war that this is permitted (*gewährt*) to the particular: it is [a] crime [committed] *for the Universal* [= State]; the end [of war is] the conservation [mediated by negation] of the whole [= State] against the enemy, which is ready to destroy this whole. This alienation (*Entäusserung*) [of the Particular to the Universal] must have precisely this abstract form, to be deprived-of-individuality; death must be received and given coldly; not be a deliberate [*commenté*] (*statarische*) struggle, in which the particular perceives the adversary and kills him in an immediate hatred; no, death is given and received in-the-void (*leer*) – *impersonally*, in consequence of the smoke from the powder [*à partir de la fumée de la poudre*].

It is therefore indeed murderous war that assures historical freedom and the free historicity of Man. Man is historical only to the extent that he participates actively in the life of the state, and that participation culminates in the voluntary risk of life in a purely political war. Also man is truly historical or human only to the extent that he is a warrior, at least potentially.

Hegel said so in so many words in the *System of Morality* (of 1802?). He again accepts there the irreducible division of society into three 'estates' (*Stände*) or classes: peasants, manufacturers [*industriels*] and merchants, and the nobility. The first two 'estates' work, but they do not struggle and do not risk their lives for the state. The nobility is on the contrary essentially [a] warrior [class], which permits it to lead an authentically human life, even while remaining ideal and profiting from the products of the work of the other classes: 'their work cannot be other than that of war, or an educative-formation (*Bilden*) for this work' (Vol. VII, p. 476, lines 16–18) [p. 472, 16–18]. Now it is the nobility and it

alone, that real-izes History. The other classes only submit to it, and they can only passively contemplate the historical process incarnated in the political and warlike existence of the nobles.

Hegel says it in highly 'metaphysical', even Schellingian language – but none the less quite clearly – [in the following] (Vol. VII, p. 476, line 38–p. 477, line 8) [p. 472, line 38–p. 473, line 8]:

The first usefulness [of the estate of the warrior nobility] consists in the fact that it is the absolute real moral concrete-form, by constituting thus for them [= the two other estates] the image of the Absolute [= the State] which-exists-as-a-given-being (*seienden*) and which is moved [-dialectically, = historically, which is] the highest real contemplation that moral nature requires. By their nature, these [non-warrior] estates stop at this contemplation. They do not exist in the absolute concept, by which this [entity], which is posited (*gesetztes*) for consciousness only as an exterior-entity (*Äusseres*), would be their own Spirit, absolute [dialectically]-moving itself, which would surmount (*überwände*) all their differences and [given] specific-determinations. That their moral nature achieves his contemplation – this advantage is offered them by the first estate [of the warrior nobility].

Later, and notably in the *Phenomenology*, Hegel no longer accepts this 'feudal' conception of society. The existence of a class of idle warriors is for him only a transitory historical phenomenon. But the theme of the historical necessity of war is taken up again in the *Phenomenology*.

Hegel says there, among other things, the following (p. 324, lines 10–33):

On the one hand, the community (*Gemeinwesen*) can therefore be organized into systems of personal autonomy and of [private] property, [private] right, real and personal; in the same way, the modes of labour for the primarily particular-and-isolated ends of gain and enjoyment, [such modes] [can] be articulated into associations (*Zusammenkünften*) of their own and [can] become-autonomous. [But] the Spirit of general association [= the State] is *undivided-unity* (*Einfachheit*) and [is] the *negative-or-negate-ive* essential-reality (*Wesen*) of these systems which isolate themselves. In order not to permit them to take root and to become fixed (*festwerden*) in this process-of-isolation, which if it happened, the whole would decompose and the Spirit evaporate, the government must shake up the systems from time to time by wars, to injure and disturb thereby the order and the right of autonomy that are granted them (*zurechtgemachten*), and through the labour imposed [by warfare] to let the individuals know their master, [i.e.] death, individuals who, by plunging themselves (*sich vertiefend*) in these sys-

tems, get detached from the whole and tend towards inviolable [isolated] *being-for-itself* and the security of the [private] person. Through this dissolution (*Auflösung*) of the form of the fixed-and-stable-subsistence [*du maintien-fixe-et-stable*] (*Bestehens*), the Spirit [= State] removes-the-danger of the fall (*Versinken*) into natural empirical-existence (*Dasein*) away from [*à partir de*] the customary-moral [= historical or human] [empirical-existence], and it conserves and raises up the personal-Self of its consciousness into *freedom* and into its *force*.

To be sure, this text is found in the section devoted to the analysis of the ancient state (chapter VI, A, *a*). Now the Master, the citizen of the pagan state, is by definition idle. Not working, he does not 'negate' the nature exterior to him. His truly human activity, i.e. free or negate-ive, is reduced to the negation of his own innate 'nature'. And that negation culminates in the voluntary risk of life, incurred in the struggle for pure prestige, in a purely political war, stripped of every 'vital necessity'. The pagan state, in which the citizens are idle warriors, cannot therefore be truly human, i.e. free and historical, except in and through the wars of prestige that it wages from time to time.

The Slave, and the working ex-Slave, can in principle humanize themselves through their labour, without risking their lives. For in working, they 'negate' the given and exterior real and, as a consequence, transform themselves. In principle, the state in which the citizens work could therefore renounce wars without decomposing as a state or truly human entity. But in the text cited, Hegel says that in practice a state that is essentially pacifist ceases to be a state properly speaking, and becomes a private industrial and commercial association that has for its supreme goal the well-being of its members, that is precisely the satisfaction of their 'natural', namely, animal, desires. It is therefore, in the last analysis, participation in bloody political struggle that raises man above the animal by making a citizen of him.

However that may be, the final goal of human becoming is, according to Hegel, the synthesis of the warlike existence of the Master and the life of labour of the Slave. The Man who is fully satisfied by his existence, and who achieves precisely thereby the historical evolution of humanity, is the Citizen of the universal and homogeneous state, that is for Hegel, the worker-soldier of the revolutionary armies of Napoleon. Therefore it is indeed war (for Recognition) that terminates History and carries Man to his perfection (= satisfaction). Thus, Man can perfect himself only to the extent that he is mortal and accepts, with an awareness of what is involved, the risk of life.

Of course, once the universal and homogeneous Empire is established, there are no more wars or revolutions. Man can live in it thenceforth without risking his life. But the truly human existence is then that of the

Wise Man, who limits himself to *comprehending* everything, without ever *negating* or *modifying* anything (except for transposing the 'essences' of the real into discourse). This existence is therefore neither *free* nor *historical* in the proper sense of these words, in the sense that Hegel himself ascribes to them when he speaks of Man before the end of History. Freedom and historicity properly speaking are inseparable from death: only a mortal being can be free and historical, provided that it accept the idea and the reality of its death and that it be able to risk its life without any 'necessity', in function of an 'idea' or 'ideal'.

In fine, human *individuality* is itself also conditioned by death. We can deduce this by admitting, with Hegel, that one can be individual only by being free, and that one cannot be free without being finite or mortal. But this consequence also flows directly from the Hegelian definition of the Individual.

The Individual, for Hegel, is a synthesis of the Particular and the Universal. *Particularity* would be purely 'given', 'natural', animal, were it not associated, in human *individuality*, with the *universality* of discourse and of action (the discourse proceeding from the action). Now the action of the particular – and it is always a *particular* that acts – is truly *universal* only if it represents and realizes the 'general will' of a 'community' (*Gemeinwesen*), that is, in the last analysis, of a state. It is only by acting as [a] citizen (*against* his particular 'private' interest) that [a] man is truly and really universal, even while remaining particular; it is only in and through the state that human individuality is manifested and effectuated, for it is the state that attributes to the *particular* a *universally* recognized reality and value. But action by and for the state culminates in the risk of (particular) life for purely political (= universal) ends; a citizen who refuses to risk his life for the state loses his citizenship, that is [his] universal recognition. It is therefore in the final analysis because he is able to *die* that [a] man is able to be an individual.

Hegel says it in a very clear manner in the *Lectures* of 1803–4 (Vol. XIX, p. 230, line 32–p. 231, line 10):

This given-being of the dialectical-suppression (*Aufgehobenseins*) of the particular totality [that is of the Citizen, of the individual] is the totality [taken] as absolutely universal, as absolute *Spirit* [= People, = state]. It is the Spirit as absolutely real Consciousness. The particular totality [that is the individual] contemplates itself [in the state, as citizen,] as an ideal [totality], dialectically suppressed; and it is no longer particular; it is on the contrary for itself this dialectical-suppression of itself, and it [i.e. 'the particular totality'] is recognized [as Citizen], it is *universal* [in so much as [*en tant que*] Citizen] only as [*en tant que*] that dialectically-suppressed [totality]. The Totality [= the Universal] in so much as [it is] a Particularity [, that is Individuality,]

is posited in (*an*) itself as a solely possible totality, not-existing-for-itself, solely [as a totality which,] in its subsisting-in-existence (*Bestehen*), is always ready for death, which has renounced itself, which exists, it is true, as particular totality – as family, or in [private] property and [personal] enjoyment, but in such a fashion that this [purely particular] relationship [that the family, property and enjoyment is] is for itself an ideal [relationship] and proves [*erweist*] itself as [or by] sacrificing itself.

The fact that Individuality implies and presupposes finitude or death can be shown, moreover, in another way.

The Universal is the *negation* of the Particular as Particular. If we want to transform a concrete entity (= a particular) into a concept (= a universal), into a 'general notion' we must detach it from the *hic et nunc* of its empirical existence (this dog is here and now, but the concept 'this dog' is 'everywhere' and 'always'). In the same way, if we want to *realize* individuality by transforming the particularity of existence into human universality, we must *really* detach the man from his *hic et nunc*. But for the human *animal* this real detachment is equivalent to death, for in ceasing to exist here and now it no longer exists at all (as *dead*, this dog is also 'everywhere' and 'always'). Thus, the real penetration of the Universal into the Particular is the completion of the finitude of this latter, that is its actual death. And if *human* existence can be universal even while remaining particular, that is if Man can *exist* as an individual, it is solely because the universality of death can be present in him during his life-time: ideally, in the consciousness that he has of it; and really, through the voluntary risk of life (the consciousness presupposing the risk).

Hegel insists, on several occasions, on the fact that it is death that is the final manifestation and, if we can say it, the 'realization', of the Universal in empirical existence. He says so, among other places, in the *Lectures* of 1803–4, in the *Lectures* of 1805–6 and in the *Phenomenology*:

Death is the aspect of the duplication [*dédoublement*] of the kind [into] particularity and universality, and the perfect liberation of the constitutive-elements [which are the Particular and the Universal]; [death is] the immediate unity of given-Being (*Seins*), *but in its concept* [it is] *the universal personal-Self (Selbst), which exists as universal* [Vol. XIX, p. 254, lines 4–8]. In death, the absolute power, the *master* of the *particular*; that is to say, the common [= universal] will has become pure *given-Being* [which the cadaver of the citizen dead for the state is] [Vol. XX, p. 225, note 3]. This Universality to which the Particular succeeds as *such*, is pure given-Being, death . . . Death is the completion-or-perfection (*Vollendung*) and the supreme work that the indi-

vidual as such [that is as Particular] undertakes for the community [= the state, = the Universal] [*Phenomenology*, p. 231, lines 31–2 and p. 232, lines 6–8].

Thus, the 'faculty of death' (*Fähigkeit des Todes*) is the necessary and sufficient condition, not only of the freedom and historicity of man, but also of his universality, without which he would not be truly individual.

'The true being of Man is his *action*', says Hegel. Now Action is the realization of Negativity, which manifests itself on the 'phenomenal' level as death. Which means, as a conscious and voluntary death, that is *freely* accepted, without any vital *necessity*. Such an acceptance of death is produced when a man consciously risks his life in function solely of the desire for 'recognition' (*Anerkennen*), solely from his 'vanity'. The desire for recognition is the desire for a *desire*, that is not for a *given* (= natural) being, but for the presence of the *absence* of such a being. This desire [for recognition] *transcends* therefore the natural given, and to the extent that it *realizes* itself it creates a trans-natural or *human* being. But the desire *realizes* itself only to the extent that it has more power than the natural given being, that is to the extent that it annihilates it. The being that annihilates itself in function of a desire for recognition disappears, it is true; but its disappearance is that of a *human being* – it is a *death* in the proper sense of the term. And it is this annihilation of the animal that is the creation of Man. Man is himself annihilated, it is true, in his death. But so long as that death endures [*dure*] as a conscious will to risk life with a view to recognition, Man maintains himself in empirical existence as a *human* being, that is [as] transcendent in relation to *given* being, to nature.

Man appears therefore (or creates himself) for the first time in the (given) natural World as a combatant in the first bloody Struggle for pure prestige. That is to say that a being cannot constitute itself as human except on condition of being finite or mortal (which means 'living'). And that is also to say that a being cannot live humanly except on condition of 'realizing' his death: becoming conscious of it, 'bearing' it, being capable of facing it voluntarily. To be a Man – is, for Hegel, to be able and to know how to die. 'The true being of Man' is therefore, in the final analysis, his death as a *conscious* phenomenon.⁶

The idea of the bloody Struggle for recognition, which engenders the relationship of Mastery and Servitude, appeared in the writings of Hegel around 1802 (*System of Morality*, Vol. VII, pp. 445–7) [pp. 441–3]. But it is above all in the *Lectures* of 1803–4 that Hegel insists at length on this idea. The theme returns in the *Lectures* of 1805–6. And in the *Phenomenology* (1806) the notion of the *anthropogenetic* value of the Struggle and of the Risk of life is definitively evolved and formulated in a perfectly clear manner.

Here are, first of all, some passages from the *Lectures* of 1803–4.

Hegel begins by saying that the simple, purely 'natural' *possession* that we observe in the animal becomes essentially human *property* – i.e. a *recognized*, namely, juridical, possession – only in and through a struggle to the death engaged in with a view to that recognition. It is not in order really to possess the disputed thing that one risks one's life in that struggle for pure prestige; it is in order to gain recognition for one's exclusive *right* to the possession. And this right does not become *real*, the 'legal person' [*le 'sujet juridique'*] (= specifically human being) is not realized, except in and through this risk, and in the last analysis, in and through death.

Hegel expresses himself as follows:

The particular is a Consciousness [= Man] only to the extent that each particularity of his possession (*Beisitzes*) and of his given-being appears as attached to his total essential-reality (*Wesen*), [as] entailed [*impliquée*] (*aufgenommen*) in his Indifference, to the extent that he *posits* each constitutive-element (Moment) *as* [what is] *himself*; for this is Consciousness, the ideal-being of the World. Consequently, [even] the loss [*lésion*] of one of his particularities is infinite; it is an absolute outrage, an outrage to him [taken] as a whole, an outrage to his honour; and a conflict on the basis of any particular thing is a struggle for the whole. The [disputed] thing, [that is] the specific-determination, is not at all viewed as value, as thing; it is on the contrary entirely nullified, entirely ideal; there is only the fact that [the thing] is related to me, that I am a Consciousness, that the thing has lost its opposition over and against me [by becoming my recognized property]. The two [adversaries], who recognize each other and want to know themselves as being recognized mutually as this totality of particulars, [these two] confront each other as this totality. And the significance-and-importance (*Bedeutung*) that they give mutually to each other is: [(a)] that each appear [*apparaître*] in the consciousness of the other as the one who excludes him from every *extension* of his particularity [that is from everything that this latter possesses]; [(b)] that he be, in this, his exclusion [or exclusivity], really [a] totality. Neither can demonstrate it to the other by words, assurances, threats of promise[s]. For language is only the ideal existence of Consciousness, while here objectively-real-entities oppose each other, that is absolutely-opposed-entities, entities-existing-absolutely-for-themselves, and their relationship is absolutely a practical relationship, [which is] itself objectively-real. The middle-term (*Mitte*) of their recognition (*Anerkennens*) must be itself objectively-real. *Consequently, they must-necessarily (müssen) each injure the other [se léser l'un l'autre];* the fact that each one posits itself as exclusive totality in the [sa] particularity of his existence must-neces-

sarily become objectively-real; outrage is necessary; [Vol. XIX, p. 226, line 6–p. 227, line 20]. And that conflict must and should (*muss und soll*) take place, for the fact that the particular as such is Reason (*Vernunft*), [an] Indifference, cannot be known except to the extent that each particularity of his possession and of his given-being is posited in that Indifference [?], and [to the extent] that he relates himself to it [each particularity] as [a] whole. This can be shown only to the extent that he engages (*daraufsetzt*) all his existence for his [sa] conservation [as proprietor], [that] he absolutely does not subdivide himself [*se partage*]. And the demonstration is completed solely with death [Vol. XIX, p. 226, note 3, lines 1–7].

But it is not only in order to gain recognition for his property and to gain recognition for himself as proprietor (= legal subject or person) that a man must risk his life in the struggle to the death for pure prestige. He must do it also in view of the recognition of his reality and of his human value in general. Now for Hegel, Man is humanly *real* and really *human* only to the extent that he is *recognized* as such. It is therefore in order to *be* human and in order to manifest himself or *appear* as such that Man must be able to die and must know how to risk his life.

Hegel explains it as follows:

Each one can be recognized by the other only to the extent that his manifold appearance (*mannigfaltige Erscheinung*) is indifferent in him, [that he] demonstrates himself as infinite in each particularity of his possession and revenges each offence (*Verletzung*) [by going] as far as the death [of the offender]. And that offence must-necessarily take place, for Consciousness [= Man] must-necessarily have for [its] goal (*auf . . . gehen*) that recognition; the particulars must-necessarily offend each other mutually, in order to know themselves (*erkennen*) [and to know] if they are endowed-with-reason [= human]. For Consciousness is essentially such, that the totality of the particular has opposed itself and is the same in that act-of-becoming-other (*Anderswerden*), that the totality of the particular is in another consciousness, and is the consciousness of the other and that in this latter is precisely this absolute maintaining of its [own] totality that it has for itself; that is to say [that Consciousness is essentially such] that it must be recognized by the other. But the fact my totality, [taken] as [that] of a particular, is in the other consciousness precisely that totality existing-for itself, [that is the fact] that it is recognized, respected – I could not know it except through the appearance of the activity (*Handelns*) of the other in the face of my totality; and by the same token, the other must at the same time appear to me himself as a totality, just as I appeared to him. If they behave negatively [by avoiding each other],

if they leave each other mutually [in peace] – then neither one has appeared to the other as [a] totality, nor [has] the given-being of the one [appeared] as a totality in the consciousness of the other, neither [as] presentation (*Darstellen*) nor [as] recognition. Language, explanations, promise[s], none of these are that recognition; for language is but an ideal middle-term [between the two]: it disappears as it appears, it is not a permanent (*bleibendes*), or real, recognition [Vol. XIX, p. 226, note 3, line 15 to the end]. Each particular must posit itself as totality in the consciousness of the other in such a way that he commits against the other, for the conservation of any particularity whatsoever, all its visible [*apparaissante*] totality its [very] life; and by the same token, each one must-necessarily have for [its] goal the death of the other. I cannot know myself in the consciousness of the other as that particular totality [that is as human individual or person] except to the extent that I posit myself in his consciousness as being, in my exclusion [of him], a totality of exclusion [that is as] having his death as [my] end. In having his death as end, I expose myself to death, I risk my own life. I commit the contradiction of wanting to affirm-or-impose (*behaupten*) the particularity of my given-being and of my possession; and this affirmation transforms itself into its opposite, [namely, in the fact] that I sacrifice all that possession and possibility of all possession and enjoyment, [in other words] [that I sacrifice] life itself. In positing myself as totality of particularity, I dialectically-suppress myself as totality of particularity; I want to be recognized in this extension of my existence, in my given-being and [in] my possession; but I transform it in this [sense], that I dialectically-suppress that existence, and I am not recognized in truth as endowed-with-reason [= human], as totality, except to the extent that, by having as end the death of the other, I myself risk my own life and dialectically-suppress that extension of my existence itself, [that is] the totality of my particularity.

This recognition of the particularity of the totality brings with itself therefore the nothingness of death. Each one must-necessarily know of the other if he is an absolute Consciousness [= Man]. Each one must-necessarily posit himself in such a relationship over and against the other, that this might come to the light of day; he must-necessarily offend him, and each one can know of the other that he is [a] totality [= individuality or human person] only by forcing him to go the death (*bis auf den Tod treibt*); and in the same way, each one shows himself to himself as [being a] totality only by going with himself to the death. If he stops [*s'arrête*], in himself, this side [*en-deça*] (*innerhalb*) of death, if he shows himself to the other only as committing the loss of a part or [even] the totality of the possession, as [risking] [only] wounds [and] not life itself – he is then for the other, in-an-immediate-manner, a

non-totality; he is not absolutely for himself; he becomes the slave of the other. If he stops, in himself, this side of death and ceases the combat (*Streit*) before the putting to death, then he has not demonstrated himself as totality nor [has he] recognized the other as such. . . .

This recognition of the particulars is therefore in itself [an] absolute contradiction: recognition is only the given-being of Consciousness, [taken] as totality, in an other Consciousness; but to the extent that the [first] Consciousness becomes objectively-real, it dialectically-suppresses the other Consciousness [by killing it]; thereby the recognition dialectically-suppresses itself. It does not realize itself, but on the contrary ceases to be [= to exist] to the extent that (*indem*) it is [= exists]. And none the less Consciousness is not [= does not exist] at the same time except as an act-of-being-recognized by an other, and it is at the same time Consciousness only as absolute numerical unity (*Eins*), and [it] must-necessarily be recognized as such; but this signifies that it must-necessarily have as its goal the death of the other and its own, and it is not [= does not exist] except in the objective-reality of death. [Vol. XIX, p. 228, line 17–p. 229, line 31, and p. 230, lines 7–17.]

Human reality is therefore in the last analysis 'the objective-reality of death': Man is not only *mortal*; he is *death* incarnate; he *is* his own death. And in contrast to 'natural', purely biological death, the death that is Man is a 'violent' death, at the same time conscious of itself and voluntary. Human death, the death of man – and consequently all his truly human existence – is therefore, if we prefer, a *suicide*.

Hegel says it in so many words in the *Lectures* of 1805–6 (Vol. XX, p. 211, lines 34–6):⁷

It appears to Consciousness [= to the man engaged in the Struggle for recognition] [taken] as consciousness, that it has for [its] end the *death* of an other; but [in itself or for us, which is to say, in truth,] it has for [its] end its own death; [it is] suicide, to the extent that it exposes itself to *danger*.

Now it is only in the Struggle for recognition, and solely through the risk of life that this latter implies, that the given (animal) being creates itself as *human* being. It is therefore the very *being* of Man that 'appears' or manifests itself as a deferred *suicide* or, as Hegel would say, [a suicide] 'mediated' (*vermittelt*) by the negative Action that engenders a consciousness discursive of the exterior and of itself. Man is a being who commits suicide, or who is at least capable of committing suicide (*Fähig-*

keit des Todes). The human existence of Man is a conscious and voluntary death [which is] in the course of coming about [*en voie de devenir*].

In the *Phenomenology*,⁸ Hegel takes up again and refines the theme of the Struggle for recognition. He insists on its *anthropogenetic* character: it is in and through this Struggle alone that Man can create himself starting out from the animal. And Hegel states clearly that what is important in this Struggle is not the will to kill, but that of exposing oneself to the danger of death without any necessity, without being forced to it as an animal. It is through the danger of death voluntarily incurred in the Struggle for pure prestige that one attains the *truth* of Recognition. The 'truth' – which is to say the revealed-reality, and therefore the reality itself. Now Man is humanly *real* only to the extent that he is *recognized*. It is therefore the human *reality* itself that is constituted or creates itself in and through the voluntary act of confronting death.

Thus, Hegel maintains and re-enforces in the *Phenomenology* the fundamental idea of the *Lectures* of 1803–4, in which he assimilates the self-creation of Man to the actualization of his death. But he abandons the paradox that he had at first maintained. To be sure, he continues to say that death signifies for man his total and definitive annihilation (cf. *Phenomenology*, p. 145). But he no longer says that the *realization* of Man cannot be entirely accomplished except in actual *death*, that is precisely through *annihilation*. In the text in question, he says expressly that the mere *risk* of life suffices to real-ize the human being. A being that has voluntarily risked its life, but that has escaped death, can *live* humanly, that is [can] maintain itself as a man in empirical existence (*Dasein*) in the midst of the natural World.

And it is precisely through the risk of life that Man comprehends that he is essentially *mortal* in the sense that he cannot *exist* humanly outside the animal that serves as a support for his self-consciousness.

The man who has engaged in the Struggle for recognition must remain alive in order to be able to *live* humanly. But he lives *humanly* only to the extent that he is *recognized* by the other. His adversary must therefore *also* escape death. The combat must cease before the putting to death – contrary to what Hegel had said in the *Lectures* of 1803–4 (Vol. XIX, p. 229).

In those *Lectures*, Hegel allowed for that eventuality. It comes about when one of the two adversaries refuses to risk [his] life and submits to the other, by becoming his Slave, that is by recognizing him without being recognized in return. But to refuse the risk is to remain within the limits of animality. The Slave is not, therefore, a truly human being, and 'recognition' by him cannot, consequently, real-ize the humanity of the recognized. Thus, true recognition can be effected only in and through *death*, which *annihilates* the one who recognizes; therefore the recognition

itself [is annihilated] and as a consequence [also] the recognized as recognized – i.e. as a truly human being. Hence the paradox.

In the *Phenomenology* Hegel avoids this paradox by admitting the humanity of the Slave, and therefore the anthropogenetic value of his recognition of the Master. But how does he justify the humanity of the being who has precisely *refused* to subordinate his animal life to the human and anthropogenetic desire for Recognition?

The Master is humanized (is realized as Master, that is as a specifically human being) through the recognition by the Slave, which he imposes on this latter in accepting the *risk* 'against-nature' that the future Slave refuses. As for the slave himself, he is humanized (is realized as Slave, which is *also* a specifically human mode of being) through the *cognizance* he takes of his essential finitude in experiencing the dread of death, that death appearing to him *in the course of a Struggle for recognition*, that is as something that is not a purely biological necessity.

Just like the Master, the Slave is conscious of himself, that is, [he is] essentially *human* in his empirical existence. To be sure, at the beginning, at his nascent stage so to speak, the Slave is human only potentially, while the humanity of the Master is 'objectively-real', since it is actually recognized. But it remains no less the case that Man creates himself, through the Struggle, at the same time, as Master and Slave, and that the two are specifically human. And they are such, in the last analysis, through the fact that they have both been placed in the presence of their death.

The Slave realizes and perfects his humanity in *labouring* in the service of the Master. But this servile or serving Labour [Travail] has an anthropogenetic virtue only to the extent that it is born of the Dread of death and is accompanied by the consciousness of the essential finitude of the one who serves by labouring.

In contrast to the Master, who remains forever fixed in his humanity as Master, the Slave develops and perfects his humanity, [which was] servile at its origin. He raises himself to [the level of] discursive thought and elaborates the abstract notion of freedom; and he creates himself also as a Citizen who is free and ultimately fully *satisfied*, by transforming the given World through the Labour that he performs in the Service of the community. It is therefore he [the Slave-Citizen], and not the Master, who is Man properly speaking, the individual who freely creates History. But we must not forget to notice that Service and Labour are free and creative only to the extent that they are accomplished within [or in terms of] the Dread that is born of the consciousness of death. It is therefore, when all is said and done, this consciousness of death that humanizes Man and constitutes the ultimate basis of his humanity.

If there is to be murder and bloody struggle for recognition, it is in order that there may be 'suicide' or *voluntary* risk of life. But this risk

itself, which is actualized in the Master, is there in order that there may take place in the Slave the experience of death, which reveals to him his own finitude. And it is life in the presence of death that is 'the life of the Spirit', which is to say, a specifically human life, able to attain its perfection or the fullness of satisfaction.

Man is the only being in the world who *knows* that he must die, and we can say that he *is* the consciousness of his death: truly human existence is an existing consciousness of death, or a death conscious of itself. The perfections of man being the fullness of consciousness of self, and Man being essentially finite in his very being, it is in the conscious acceptance of finitude that human existence culminates. And it is the full (discursive) comprehension of the meaning of death that constitutes that Hegelian Wisdom that completes History by procuring Satisfaction for Man.

For in attaining to Wisdom, Man understands that it is solely his finitude or his death that assures him absolute freedom, by liberating him not only from the given World but also from the eternal and infinite given – which would be God, if Man were not mortal. And the consciousness of this absolute freedom satisfies the infinite pride of Man, which constitutes the very ground of his human existence and which is the ultimate [and] irreducible motive [*mobile*] of his act of self-creation.

In a general way, Hegelian anthropology is a secularized Christian theology. And Hegel is perfectly aware of it. He repeats on several occasions that everything said by Christian theology is absolutely true, provided that it is applied, not to an imaginary transcendent God, but to real Man, living in the World. The theologian does anthropology without taking account of it. Hegel merely becomes truly conscious of the knowledge called theo-logical, by explaining that its real object is not God, but historical Man, or, as he likes to say, 'the Spirit of the people (*Volksgeist*)'.

Among other places, this conception is clearly expressed by Hegel at the end of the *Lectures* of 1805–6 (Vol. XX, p. 268, lines 7–21):

Religion [in general] is Spirit represented[-as-an-exterior-entity] (*vorge-stellter*): [it is] the personal-Self (*Selbst*) which does not bring into coincidence (*nicht zusammenbringt*) its pure consciousness with its objectively-real consciousness, [and] for which the content of the former is opposed [to it], in the latter, as an other-entity [*entité-autre*]. [In other terms, the Religious [person] is one who does not know that he is speaking in fact of himself when he believes that he is speaking of God]. . . . [The] idea of the absolute [or Christian] Religion is this speculative idea that the personal-Self, [or] the objectively-real-entity, is thought [*la pensée*], [that] essential-reality (*Wesen*) and given-being (*Sein*) [are] the same thing. This is put [= expressed] in such a way that God, [that is,] the absolute transcendent (*jenseitige*) essential-reality,

[has] become *Man*, this *objectively-real-being* here; but also [it is put in such a way] that this objective-reality is dialectically-suppressed, has become a past [reality], and [that] this God, who is [on the one hand a] [given particular] objective-reality and [on the other hand an] objective reality [which has been] dialectically-suppressed or universal, is the same thing as [a] Spirit-of-the-people; it is only as immediateness [that is, as represented (*vorgestellt*) as a single man named Jesus] that it is the Spirit of the [Christian] community. *That God is Spirit, this is the content* of that [Christian] religion.

Hegel is therefore in accord with Christianity to the extent of saying that the 'Absolute', or the Totality of what *is*, is not Identity, given-Being, Substance or nature, but Spirit, that is Being revealed by the Word [*la Parole*] or by discursive Reason (Logos). But for the Christian this 'absolute' Spirit is a transcendent God, while for Hegel it is Man-in-the-world. And that radical and irreducible difference amounts in the final analysis to this, that the Christian Spirit is eternal and infinite, while the Spirit that Hegel had in mind is essentially finite or mortal. It is by introducing the idea of death that theo-logy is transposed into anthropology. And it is by taking that idea literally, that is by suppressing the notions of survival and resurrection that we arrive at the *true* or Hegelian anthropology.

Hegel is perfectly aware of this also, and he says so clearly in [the course of] interpreting the evangelical myth in a marginal note, which relates to the passage cited (Vol. XX, p. 268, note 3, last two lines):

It is not this man here who dies, but the *divine* [as such]; it is precisely because of that (*eben dadurch*) that this divine [or this divinity] becomes Man.

Thus, in demonstrating that consciousness, the consciousness of self, the rational will, and discursive reason imply and presuppose finitude or death, Hegel demonstrates that the 'absolute Spirit', or the totality of revealed Being, is not an eternal God creating the World out of Nothingness, but *Man*, negating a natural World, given from all eternity, in which he himself is born and dies as historical humanity.

In the final analysis, the God of Christian theology (of ancient or pagan inspiration) is given-Being (*Sein*), eternally identical to itself, realizing itself and revealing itself in and through a natural World, which only manifests the essence and the power of existing of the Being that *is*. The Man of Hegel, on the contrary, is the Nothingness (*Nichts*) that annihilates given-Being existing as World, and that annihilates itself (as real historical time or History) in and through that annihilation of the given.

The ultimate basis of the natural or 'divine' empirical-existence

(*Dasein*) is *given-Being* or the power (*Macht*) of subsisting eternally in *identity* with itself. The ultimate basis of human empirical-existence, on the contrary, the source and origin of human reality, is *Nothingness* or the power of *Negativity*, which is realized and is [made] manifest only through the transformation of the given *identity* of *being* into [the] create-ive *contradiction* of 'dialectical' or historical *becoming*, in which there is existence only in and through Action (which is, if we prefer, the essential-reality or the 'essence' of Man), and in which the agent is not what he *is* (as given) and *is* what he is not (from all eternity). If Nature or 'God' is the Being that *is* (as real or 'physical' Space), Man is the Nothingness that *annihilates* (as Action or real, 'historical', Time) by 'dialectically suppressing' what *is* and by *creating* what is not. This central and ultimate idea of Hegelian philosophy, the idea that the foundation of the source of objective reality (*Wirklichkeit*) and of human empirical existence (*Dasein*) is the Nothingness that is manifest or that reveals itself as negate-ive or create-ive Action [which is] free and conscious of itself – that idea is clearly expressed in a beautiful and 'romantic' passage in the *Lectures* of 1805–6, which Hegel delivered at the very moment when he was writing the *Phenomenology*.

Here is that passage (Vol. XX, p. 180, line 24–p. 181, line 8):

Man is this night, this empty Nothingness, which contains everything in its undivided-simplicity (*Einfachheit*): a wealth of an infinite number of representations, of images, no one of which precisely attains to the spirit [*dont aucune ne lui vient précisément à l'esprit*], or [even more] which are not as really-present (*gegenwärtig*). It is the night, the interiority-or-intimacy (*Innere*) of Nature, which exists here: [i.e.] [the] *pure personal-Self*. In phantasmagorical representations there is night all around: here there rises up suddenly a head all bloody, there another pale apparition (*Gestalt*); and they all disappear just as suddenly. It is this night that we perceive when we look into a man's eyes: [we then immerse our gaze] in a night that becomes *terrible* (*furchtbar*); it is the night of the world which [then] presents itself (*hängt entgegen*) to us.

Power (*Macht*) to draw images from that night or to let them fall from in autonomous-positing (*Selbstsetzen*) [that is free creation], interior consciousness, Action (*Tun*). It is into this night that is withdrawn [*qui s'est retirée*] the entity-existing-as-a-being(which-is-)given (*das Seiende*); but the [dialectical] movement of this power is equally posited.

The dialectical movement of the power that maintains in Being the Nothingness that Man is – is History. And that power itself is realized and is manifest as negate-ive or create-ive Action: Action negate-ive of the given that Man himself is, or [the] action of the *Struggle* that creates

historical Man; and Action negative of the given that the natural World is, in which the animal lives, or [the] action of *Labour* that creates the cultural World, outside of which Man is only a pure Nothingness, and in which he differs from Nothingness *only for a certain time*.⁹

Notes

* Complete text of the last two lectures of the academic year 1933/4. Originally published as Appendix II, 'L'Idée de la mort dans la philosophie de Hegel', in Kojève's *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947; 5th edition), pp. 527–73.

In the following translation numbered notes are Kojève's; the translator uses symbols. Small brackets represent Kojève's use of brackets; text-size brackets indicate the translator's insertions. An attempt has been made to reproduce Kojève's punctuation and sentence structure as closely as possible, with the result that those insertions, in French and English, may annoy the eye even where they do aid in comprehension. In this matter Kojève himself has been the model, and those who are familiar with the grey, and cluttered pages of the original will understand. (Parentheses in the text are always Kojève's.)

† References to the *Phenomenology* (which Kojève's text cites as 'PhG') are to the Hoffmeister edition of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952). Where Kojève's page or line numbers do not correspond (he was using a 1937 edition of Hoffmeister), the 1953 edition's equivalents are substituted. So far as *content* is concerned, Kojève's French version of Hegel determines the translation of quoted passages.

1. According to Hegel *no* truth is possible before the completion of the dialectical (= historical) process. But that consequence is necessary only if we admit the dialecticity of the *totality* of Being. By admitting, on the contrary, that Negativity occurs only in human reality and that *given* Being is ruled only by Identity, we can maintain the traditional notion of truth at least in relation to nature and to the *past* of Man.

2. As a matter of fact, Hegel was preceded along this way by Descartes (first attempts at a Christian *philosophy*), Kant and Fichte (Christian philosophers *par excellence*). But these three attempts at philosophical anthropology failed because their authors did not dare abandon the traditional idea (and in the last analysis 'pagan' or 'naturalist' [idea]: Identity!) of the *immortality* of Man or of the 'soul'. With his notions of 'monad' and of 'sufficient reason', Leibniz is a precursor of the Hegelian notion of Spirit, that is of a *totality* [which is] at the same time 'subjective' and 'objective'. But Leibniz did not see the essential difference that obtains between nature and History, and there is in Leibniz no anthropology properly so-called (i.e. explicit [anthropology]). As for Hegel himself, he did not succeed in *reconciling* his ('dialectical') anthropology with the traditional ('identical') philosophy of nature. He refused, rightly, to apply to Man the 'naturalistic' categories of the Greeks, and he rejected their pseudo-anthropology. But, wrongly, he also abandoned their philosophy of nature, in trying to apply to the *sum-total* of the real (as much human as natural) his own dialectical categories, which are in fact specifically and exclusively anthropological.

3. Hegel says so, in Section A of chapter IV of the *Phenomenology*. See above, the translation printed [as] 'By way of introduction' [that is 'In place of an introduction', the first chapter of the English translation of Kojève's *Introduction*

to the Reading of Hegel, edited by Allan Bloom, translated by James H. Nichols, Jr (New York: Basic Books, 1969)]. Action reverses the 'natural' course of Time in which temporal given-Being or [Being] having a meaning endures. It [i.e. Action] introduces the primacy of the future in Time, in which Being is and is given only in the present. For the present of Action is the realization of a project for the future [*d'un projet d'avenir*]: in and through Action (or better, as Action), the future has a *real presence* in Being. Now the future is *also*, like the past, the nothingness of being [*le néant de l'être*], that is its *meaning*. But this meaning was not and is not really attached to present or given existence. That is why it can in some manner be directed away from its 'natural' existence (of which it would be the essence) and orientated towards an 'artificial' existence, which is that of discourse (of which it will be the meaning). And it is as a *project in discourse* [*projet discursif*] that the future is *really present* as the future. To be sure, the project *realizes* itself in the present, and it is in the past as already *realized*. But the present, and therefore the past, of the project are penetrated and determined by the future, which subsists in it in the form of discourse. The real created by Action is therefore a real revealed by thought or the spoken word [*parole*]. It is Action (= Man) that creates the World dominated by the future, the World of Science and the arts, in the midst of a natural World dominated by the present (to the extent that the World is inanimate or 'material') and by the past (to the extent that the World is living).

4. This theme has been taken up again by Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit*, Vol. I: *Das Man und das Gerede*.

5. Hegel speaks thereof in Section A of chapter IV [of the *Phenomenology*]. See the translation of that section, printed above [as] 'By way of introduction'. [This note refers to an earlier section of the book, from which the present essay is taken.]

‡ This refers to an earlier section of the book from which the present essay is taken. The 'fragment on love' in question can be found in English in G. W. F. Hegel: *Early Theological Writings*, translated by T. M. Knox (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 302–8.

§ For references to 'Vol XIX', see J. Hoffmeister's edition of *Jenenser Realphilosophie I: Die Vorlesungen von 1803–4* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1931).

|| For references to 'Vol. XX', see *Jenaer Realphilosophie*, edited by J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1967), a reissue of Hoffmeister's *Jenenser Realphilosophie II* (1931).

¶ For references to 'Vol. VII', see G. Lasson's edition of Hegel's *Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1923). Page and line numbers in large brackets refer to this edition; those in small brackets (or in parentheses) are Kojève's originals.

* The preceding passages from 'Vol. VII' are not from the *System of Morality* of 1802 but from Hegel's essay 'Über die wissenschaftlichen Behandlungsarten des Naturrechts', also of 1802.

6. Heidegger will say, following Hegel, that human existence (*Dasein*) is a 'life in view of death' (*Leben zum Tode*). The Christian also used to say it, a long time before Hegel. But for the Christian death is but a passage into the beyond: he does not accept death properly speaking. The Christian man does not place himself face-to-face with Nothingness. He relates himself in his existence to an 'other world', which is essentially *given*. There is not therefore in him any 'transcendence' (= freedom) in the Hegelian, and Heideggerian, sense of the term.

7. Hegel devotes only two pages there (Vol. XX, pp. 211–13) to the analysis of the Struggle for recognition, and he says there nothing that is truly new.

8. See above the translation with commentary of section A of chapter IV, printed [as] 'By way of introduction' (pp. 18–22) [note from the original edition].

9. Drawn into error by the monistic ontological tradition, Hegel sometimes extends to nature his analysis of human or historical existence. He says then that *everything* that *is*, is in the last analysis an annihilation of Nothingness (which, obviously, has no meaning, and ends up in an indefensible philosophy of nature). He says, for example, in the *Lectures* of 1805–6, in [the course of] developing his philosophy of nature (Schellingian inspiration): 'The shadows are Nothingness: by the same token space and time are not – the same way as in general all is Nothingness' (Vol. XX, p. 80, lines 5–6). Heidegger has taken up again the Hegelian themes concerning death; but he neglects the complementary themes concerning Struggle and Labour; thus his philosophy does not succeed in rendering an account of History. Marx retains the themes of Struggle and Labour, and his philosophy is thus essentially 'historicist'; but he neglects the theme of death (even while admitting that man is mortal); that is why he does not see (and even less [do] certain 'Marxists') that the Revolution is not only in fact but also essentially and necessarily – bloody (the Hegelian theme of the Terror).

Hegel, Marx and Christianity (1946)

Alexandre Kojève

An unwarned reader could be misled by the title of Mr Niel's book [*De la Mediation dans la philosophie de Hegel* (Paris, 1945)]. In fact, what is involved is not an abstract analysis of the Hegelian category of *Mediation* (*Vermittlung*).^{*} It is the whole concrete content of Hegel's philosophy that is set forth. And it must be said that the author has executed a real tour de force by summarizing in fewer than 400 pages almost the totality of the Hegelian writings.

Moreover, the title chosen by Mr Niel is perfectly legitimate, and it bears witness to a profound understanding of the general structure of Hegel's thought. Indeed, to say *mediation* is to say *dialectic*, for all that is *mediated* is *dialectical*, and all that is *dialectical* is *mediated*. Now in Hegel dialectic is anything but a method of thought; it is not an artifice of philosophical exposition: dialectic is the very structure of concrete reality itself, and it only penetrates into philosophical thought to the extent that philosophical thought correctly describes this concrete reality taken as a whole. To analyse mediation (i.e. dialectic) in Hegel's philosophy is therefore to analyse that philosophy itself in its whole concrete context. And that is precisely what Mr Niel does in his book.

One might, nevertheless, regret the fact that the author did not devote a chapter to a more or less formal analysis of the very notion of mediation or dialectic. And I must say that wherever he incidentally speaks of this notion in general terms what he says about it is not, in my opinion, absolutely correct (see especially p. 70, note 10; pp. 102–4 and p. 357).

The relative lack of understanding of dialectic in Hegel does not prevent Mr Niel from giving a perfectly correct summary of the dialectical philosophy which he sets forth. This lack of understanding is, however, very grave in the sense that it inspires commentaries which give a fundamentally false meaning to correctly summarized theories. This apparent paradox is explained by the fact that Hegelian dialectical texts are neces-

sarily, and sometimes intentionally, ambiguous (as Mr Niel himself acknowledges, for example, pp. 17, 214 and 332). The same text, whether it be directly quoted or correctly summarized, can mean very different things depending on the way in which it is read. For instance, Mr Niel reads the texts and his own summaries in such a way as to give them, with many reservations, moreover (see pp. 214, 351 and 369), a theistic and even a theological meaning. Now in reality these summarized texts set forth a radically atheistic philosophy.

It must be said, however, that this essential misunderstanding, which has lasted for as long as Hegelianism exists, is only possible because Hegelian atheism has a very special character. Hegel is not atheistic in the usual sense of the word, for he does not reject the Christian *notion* of God and does not even deny its reality. And so, one often finds theological formulas in Hegelian philosophy. But, in the deepest sense, this philosophy is nevertheless radically atheistic and non-religious. For the only and the unique *reality* of the Christian notion of God for this philosophy is man, taken in the totality of his historical evolution accomplished in the midst of nature, this totality being completed (= perfect) through the Wise Man (Hegel), who reveals it itself to itself in and through the *absolute Knowledge* which he has of it. And it is enough to interpret correctly the very notions of mediation or of dialectic (or, if you prefer, of Negativity, of Time, of History) to understand that it cannot be otherwise.

In what follows, I will try to recall the genuine meaning of the Hegelian dialectic (= mediation), in order to permit the reader who does not know it to understand correctly the excellent summary which Mr Niel has made of the work of Hegel, in spite of the generally debatable commentaries which surround the expositions properly so called.

The vulgar sciences deal with *abstractions*. For they are concerned with particular entities which they isolate 'by abstraction' from the whole real universe which these entities in reality form part of. Hegelian philosophy, on the other hand, or more accurately absolute Knowledge, is concerned with Being in its concrete reality. In other words, this Knowledge does not abstract from anything (not even from itself) and reveals (= describes) the *totality* of what *is*. One can therefore say that absolute Knowledge has Totality as its 'object'; this Knowledge does nothing but analyse and reconstruct Totality out of its constitutive elements (*Momente*), which are isolated by analysis. But the totality of what is also implies the Knowledge which reveals this totality, to the extent that this Knowledge is itself real. One can therefore just as well say that Totality, real concrete Being, is at the same time revealed 'object' and revealing 'subject'. And it is precisely for this reason that concrete Being is *Totality*; or, and this

is the same thing, that it is the True (*das Wahre*), or Concept (*Begriff*), or absolute Idea.

However, in saying that real concrete Being is Totality, Concept or Idea, Hegel is enunciating something rather than this truism, which reminds us that the *concrete* real is constituted by *all* that exists. The term *Totality* has, in Hegel, a technical, or, if you please, a 'dialectical' meaning. Totality is the synthesis of Identity (= thesis) and of Negativity (= antithesis). And it is precisely because real concrete Being is not only Identity (with itself) but also Negativity (of itself) that this Being is at the same time 'subject' and 'object', that is to say, *being* revealing itself to itself through (discursive) thought and *thought* which realizes itself in being (as truth) and thinks itself in speaking of its own concrete reality or of the totality of what *is*.

The totality of what is does not remain eternally *identical* to itself. To be sure, it always remains what it is, namely, Totality (taken as Identity). But it also is always *other* than it is; it therefore negates what it is, it negates itself as it is and it is not Totality (taken as Negativity) except as the totality of its successive auto-negations. In other words, real concrete Being *changes* and is nothing other than (*is* the same as) the totality of its real changes. That is to say, Totality is neither pure identical Being (*Sein*), nor simple other than Being, that is to say, Nothingness (*Nichts*), but the synthesis of the two or Becoming (*Werden*). Or else, again, Totality is the *nihilation* of the Nothingness in Being through the annihilation of (identical) Being: it is the Temporality of the Spatiality which *is*. Totality is therefore time which *is* as space, or space which only *is* to the extent that it is *annihilated* as time by *becoming* past.

One can also say that the temporalization of Being subtracts the being from Being. For past being does not differ from present being except for the fact that it *is* not any longer, just as future being *is* not yet. But neither does the *concept* 'Being' differ from Being itself except for the fact that it *is* not in the same way that Being *is*. One can therefore say that temporalization (= Negativity) transforms Being (= Identity) into the Concept of Being, so that Totality (= Identity + Negativity), since it is Concept-which-*is* or Being-which-is-conceived, is, in effect, at the same time 'subject' and 'object', being and thought, in a word, *absolute Idea* or *Knowledge*.

Hegel expresses this 'dialectical' (= trinitarian) conception of real concrete Being also by saying that this Being is not only *in itself* (*an sich* = Thesis or Identity), but also *for itself* (*für sich* = Antithesis or Negativity); it is *in and for itself* (*an und für sich* = Synthesis or Totality). Or else, he also says that real concrete Being is always *dialectically-suppressed* (*aufgehoben*): in and through the Antithesis, Being is *suppressed* or negated as Thesis or as given Being; but just as *A* is preserved in *non-A*, negated Being is *preserved* in its being, for the Antithesis *is*; finally,

just as *non-A* is determined not only by the *non* but also by the *A*, although it is other than *A*, that is to say *B* – so too Being which is preserved in and through its negation is other than Being which is negated; and one can say that negated-preserved-Being is *sublimated* in its being, for having negated itself as given, it has transformed or formed (*gebildet* = educated) itself, so that it is no longer 'brute matter' but 'wrought product'. Or else, finally, Hegel summarizes all that precedes by saying that real concrete Being is *mediated* (*vermittelt*) in its being. Being ((*L'être*)) is Totality, i.e. Being-which-is-conceived or Idea-which-is-real, because the Identity of Being is *mediated* by Negativity. Being negates its given being, and by thus temporalizing itself through auto-negation, it creates itself through this Mediation as revealed or as thought of Being.

Such, in brief, is the 'dialectic' of Being *on the ontological plane*. And one can already see on this plane that this 'dialectic' is essentially atheistic. (One of the principal 'dialectical' texts which prove this is, moreover, quoted by Mr Niel, p. 80, note 28.)

Indeed, Being is Totality, that is to say, thought or 'subject' that one could be tempted to call 'God', only to the extent that it implies Negativity. Now this Negativity is pure nothingness (*reines Nichts*) apart from 'brute' given Being (Being which only a 'pagan' could have characterized as 'divine'). The 'subject' which Hegel has in view does not, therefore, create Being out of nothing. On the contrary, it can only be, or create itself, by *negating* given being which it therefore *presupposes*: it can only derive its own being from the being which is given to it and which is therefore independent of it. The being or the nihilation of the 'Subject' is the temporalizing annihilation of the Being which must be *before* being annihilated: the being of the 'Subject' therefore necessarily has a beginning. And since it is the (temporal) nihilation of the nothingness in Being, since it is a nothingness which nihilates (as Time), the 'Subject' is essentially the negation of itself: it therefore necessarily has an end. Now if this is the case, it is quite evident that the 'Subject' in question is certainly not 'divine'. (In the text quoted on p. 80 [[by Mr Niel]], Hegel says: 'The annihilating inquietude of the infinite is only by the being of what it annihilates.' And it is clear that the 'infinite' which is only a negation of the finite, only a non-finite, is not autonomous in its being and therefore does not have the character of a 'divine' infinite.)

All this becomes much clearer when one descends *to the metaphysical plane*.

Here real-concrete-Being is objective-Reality (*Wirklichkeit*). And, of course, there is objective reality only where there are no abstractions effected by a 'subject'. Objective-Reality is therefore, by definition, Totality. Now this objectively real totality is called 'Spirit' (*Geist*) in Hegel. The whole metaphysical problem therefore reduces itself to the question

of knowing what Spirit is 'in truth', or 'objectively', that is to say, as it reveals itself to itself.

It is evident, in the first place, that objective-Reality is not only nature (and that is precisely why Hegel calls this Reality 'Spirit'). For reality implies *all* that is objectively real, and therefore all that is realized for all here and now. However, now there are here not only 'natural', 'brute' or given realities, such as wood, for example, but also wood transformed into paper by work and words written on this paper, words having a *meaning*, and a meaning which reveals natural reality (for example, as not by itself exhausting objective Reality). In other words, the reality of what we call the 'historical world' and the 'universe of discourse', or – in brief – 'man', is just as objective as the reality of what we call the 'natural world' or 'nature'. Objective Reality or Spirit is therefore neither only nature, or the non-human world independent of human reality, nor only man, or human reality independent of the natural world. Spirit is natural-world-implying-man, or, and this is the same thing, Man-in-the-world. And just as natural objective reality is not such or such a thing taken in isolation, i.e. in abstraction from the real ties that attach it to its spatial surroundings in the present and connect it to its past and to its future, but the indissoluble whole of the natural spatio-temporal world – so too objective human reality is not such or such an 'individual' taken in fictitious isolation, but the whole historical evolution of humanity, which is accomplished in the midst of the natural world.

Objective-Reality is not nature but Spirit because the universe in fact implies man and because man is essentially something other than an animal, a plant or an inanimate thing. While living in the midst of nature, man leads a life there which is 'contra-natural', which only becomes possible to the extent that he creates a non-natural, technical or 'historical' world. This world can only be created by man through a transformation or 'formation' of the natural given (= raw materials), i.e. by an objectively real *negation* of natural objective reality, this negation being *Action* (*Tun*) in the proper and strong sense of the word. Objective human reality is therefore a negating 'antithesis' of identical or 'thetic' nature. And that is why objective-Reality is in fact 'synthetic' or 'mediated', viz 'dialectically suppressed', that is to say, 'spiritual': it is objectively real Spirit.

Man in his objective reality is Action. That is to say, he is only real to the extent that he really or 'objectively' *negates* natural reality. And this means that he is *transcendent* with respect to nature. On the one hand, he is *free* as regards it, for he can *negate* nature in its given reality and is not, therefore, determined by it; and he can even negate himself as given or as 'natural'. On the other hand, in realizing himself through *negation*, man does not arise out of nature as a result of a 'natural' evolution: he *creates* himself freely in creating the historical world.

Finally, in *negating* given nature, he sets himself in opposition to it and opposes to it what is not yet objectively real, while bringing this unreal into relation with reality: he opposes to the natural given projects (= ideas) which he realizes by Action that negates the given. He therefore opposes himself to nature in the way the 'subject' opposes itself to the 'object'. Being Action, he is also Discourse having a meaning, discourse which *reveals* through its meaning the real which is opposed to man as well as the real which creates itself as human reality. Thus, being Man-in-the-world, Spirit is 'flesh' become 'Logos'. It is an objective reality which has a *meaning* and which therefore is a *value*. It is a free creative reality which *reveals* the real (= Totality) and reveals itself as real. And it is, if you please, *infinite*, at least in the sense that it is non-finite; for in being able to *negate* the finitude of the given, whatever it be, it is not limited by this finitude, limitation or 'determination' (*Bestimmtheit*).

The metaphysical anthropology of Hegel therefore preserves the fundamental categories of Christian theology. But can one say that the Hegelian transcendence of the Spirit is anything other than the transcendence of man with respect to nature? Can one say that, for Hegel, objective-Reality is anything other than natural and human? Can one say that the Spirit of which he speaks is God?

Many perfectly univocal texts compel one to reply in the negative. One of them, which is late, moreover, is quoted by Mr Niel (p. 368, note 15) without his drawing the inevitable conclusion from it. 'It seems', Hegel says there,

that the *Weltgeist* has succeeded now [i.e. at the moment at which universal history is completed by the advent of the Wise Man or of Hegelian absolute Knowledge] in grasping *itself* as absolute Spirit. . . . The struggle ((*lutte*)) of the finite consciousness with the absolute consciousness which *seems* external to it has ceased. The absolute consciousness *has received* the reality of which it *was deprived* earlier [italics mine].

This text is very clear. The *Weltgeist* is humanity in its historical evolution in the midst of the natural world. At the end of this evolution, in the person of Hegel, man 'grasps himself as ((the)) absolute Spirit' which was earlier called 'God': Hegel understands and proclaims that what was called 'God' is, in reality, humanity, taken in the completed totality of its historical evolution. Before the advent of Hegelian knowledge, 'absolute consciousness *seems* to be *external*' to man. And this is precisely why pre-Hegelian man calls it 'God'. But that was only an illusion. In fact, theology always was an unconscious anthropology; man projected into the beyond, without realizing it, the idea that he had of himself, or the ideal of his own perfection that he pursued. Now, at the end of history

(and it is precisely because of this that it is completed) the most sublime ideal implied in Christian theology is *realized* by man. Man therefore no longer surpasses himself, and his given reality (which he *created* earlier) is now no longer a limit or a 'determination' for him. One can therefore say that 'the finite consciousness has ceased to be finite'. Now, it is 'in that way' that God 'has received' the objective reality of which he 'was deprived earlier'. Before the completion of history, i.e. before the perfection of man, the 'absolute consciousness' was only an (unconsciously anthropological) externalized 'representation' (*Vorstellung*) projected into the beyond and named 'God'. The absolute Spirit is only objectively real as finite or human consciousness which has ceased to be finite by enclosing itself upon itself in the cyclical movement of absolute Knowledge, that is to say, the complete auto-comprehension of its completed or perfect realization. The absolute Spirit is therefore 'infinite' only in the sense that it is non-finite: it is infinite through the completed active negation of the finitude of the identical or natural given which it *presupposes*. And this is why the Spirit is not God, but simply the spatio-temporal totality of objective natural and human reality or Man-in-the-world.

But isolated texts matter little. It is the whole dialectical philosophy of Hegel that is incompatible with theism of any kind whatever.

On the one hand, the spiritual which is 'dialectical' is a *negation* of the natural; it is therefore pure nothingness 'before' the existence of nature, and it would be pure nothingness if nature did not exist or if it ceased to exist; there is no trans-mundane, that is to say 'transcendent', Spirit in the theistic sense of the term. On the other hand, 'dialectical' man creates himself as human by negating himself as natural, or, generally, as 'given'; it is in this way that he *becomes*, that he is 'historical', by becoming in time other than he is at any given moment; but he remains man while surpassing himself; and that is why the spiritual realizes itself by transcending natural reality without ever being able to transcend human reality: all that is spiritual is non-natural, but all that is non-natural is human and human only.

An attempt has been made to interpret Hegel's dialectical metaphysics by saying that it is the description of the 'becoming of God' ('pantheism'). But even if one admits, *per impossibile*, that the notion of the 'becoming of God' has a meaning, it must be said that one cannot, without abusing language, characterize as 'divine' the becoming which Hegel has in mind. For, since it has a beginning and an end, that historical becoming is essentially finite in the proper sense of the term. History necessarily has a beginning, for if man is the negation of nature, a world without men must exist before there are men in the world. And history also necessarily has an end. Or, more precisely, one cannot say anything whatever that is conclusive or true unless history has an end or is even in effect completed. Indeed, if there is Totality and not only Identity, that is to say,

if Being is Becoming, the becoming (= change) of being will perpetually transform into relative error the (relative) truth of the discourse which correctly reveals being such as it was at a given moment (in its *identity* with itself). In order for there to be (absolute) truth in what becomes, becoming must be completed. Now it is *human* reality which negates, changes or changes itself in being. It is therefore *history* which has to be completed in order for there to be a truth of which one can say that it is universally and eternally (= necessarily) valid, that is to say, a truth in the proper sense of the word. Thus, either there is no Truth, no Knowledge (*Wissen*) properly so called, and the only possible attitude is that of scepticism (with its counterpart, irrational [= in-coherent] Faith [*Glauben*] which never succeeds in 'looping the loop' of its discourse or reasoning, the 'gap' in the reasoning being precisely the 'revealed' notion of the divine), or else history has an end and the Spirit is finite in its objective manifestations, being the *human* Spirit. In any case, there is therefore no possible *theology*; there is no *science* (*Wissenschaft*) of God.

To be sure, the end of history is not a limit *imposed* on man *from without*: history is, if you please, unlimited. For man can negate all that he wants ((to negate)), and he only ceases to negate and to vary if he no longer *wants* to do so. He therefore does not complete his becoming unless he is perfectly *satisfied* (*Befriedigt* = sated; see above: 'the *struggle* [*lutte*] of the finite consciousness with the absolute consciousness . . . has ceased') by what he *is*; or, more precisely, by what he has *done* – since he has *created* himself (through the negation of what did not satisfy him outside of him and within himself). And since man is alone in being able to negate and to negate himself, that which satisfies him perfectly is *perfect* in the strong sense of the term: it is something which *cannot* be surpassed *any more*. Thus, Hegel preserves the notions of (satisfied) perfection and of (perfect) satisfaction which, up to him, had been the exclusive possession of theistic thought. But in him these notions have an atheistic meaning, for the Being which is perfect in and through its satisfaction and satisfied in and through its perfection is not God but a man in the world: the Wise Man possessing absolute Knowledge and in this way *being* the Truth (= Logos).

The atheism of the ontological and metaphysical 'dialectic', which I have just analysed briefly, is in perfect accord with the phenomenological 'dialectic' of Hegel.

When one descends from the metaphysical plane to the *phenomenological plane*, objective-Reality becomes empirical-Existence (*Dasein*). The real becomes 'phenomenon': i.e. the real 'reveals' itself as a whole ((consisting)) of 'objects' opposed to a multiplicity of 'subjects' endowed with the capacity for speech; or else, again, the real 'appears' (*erscheint*) as the speaking existence of men who speak of themselves and of other men, as well as of all that is not themselves. Now, according to Hegel,

this existence is *essentially* finite or mortal, and it is exclusively because it is mortal that it is revelatory and revealed. There is 'revelation' only where there is finitude and death. And so 'God' must die in order to 'reveal' himself completely and definitively (for example, Christ); i.e. he must become 'man' and therefore cease to be 'God' (the only – theistic – error of Christianity is the Resurrection); as long as he remains 'God' he is necessarily hidden ((*abscons*)) (precisely because God *is* not, because there is no God). If there are 'phenomena', that is to say, if there are revealed and revelatory existences, this is uniquely, says Hegel, because there are on earth men who are *mortal* in the strong sense of the term, i.e. able, on the one hand, to perish voluntarily, without any 'biological necessity' (risk of life in a fight for pure prestige) and, on the other hand (in absolute Knowledge), able to become fully conscious of their essential finitude (while being fully satisfied by this very (('experience' of)) becoming conscious). Now if man is truly mortal, if he is annihilated in and through death, there is no God.¹ For the 'divine', or the 'transcendent' in the sense of the trans-mundane, is, in the final analysis, nothing but the 'natural place' (or Aristotelian 'topos', imaginary to boot) of men 'after their death': the existence of God can only be the afterlife or the resurrection of man (cf. the evangelistic 'good tidings').

This implicitly atheistic finitude of the phenomenological dialectic appears at the very moment at which the young Hegel discovers the fact of dialecticity for the first time. This discovery was made, moreover, on the phenomenological plane. And Mr Niel is right to stress that the first dialectical human phenomenon which presented itself to Hegel was the phenomenon of Love (*Liebe*). Now it is the love between essentially mortal beings which is at issue.

Love is dialectical because it is Totality and not Identity pure and simple. The Lovers (*Liebende*) are united and one. But their absolute unity is a union of two beings who are 'separate', essentially autonomous or different (difference = negation; Negativity). This is why the 'totality' of both lovers is something other than each of these lovers considered in his 'identity' with himself: their 'totality' is the child. And it is because the child is totality ('reunification' of the lovers) and not only identity that he is an educable and educated human being. Now the child is totality because the parents are 'separated' in spite of their amorous union, since they are free and autonomous individuals. And they are that only because they are *mortal* (each having to die for himself, in spite of the amorous tie which attracts him to the other). Thus it is because the parents are mortal that the child is human. And he is also the death (= Negativity) of his parents not only on the biological plane but also on the human plane. For he is himself human only because his parents educate him. But in educating him, they prepare a 'new generation' which will relegate them and the ideas they have of themselves and of the world

to the nothingness of the historical past, which will only live in the memory (*Erinnerung*) of the child. Love, death and historicity, that is to say, the humanity of man, are therefore interdependent from the beginning of Hegel's dialectical analyses.

However, this first sketch of dialectical phenomenology did not satisfy Hegel. He does not tell us why. But one can assume, with Mr Niel, that he abandoned (or, more precisely, transformed) the dialectic of love because it did not account for the phenomenon of history. To be sure, the dialectical conception of love enabled one to understand the historicity of man. But starting from it, one could not succeed in 'deducing' (= reconstructing *a posteriori*, i.e. 'understanding') the concrete content of universal history. And so, between 1800 and 1806, one sees a new phenomenological dialectic with a distinctly historical orientation appear in the various writings of Hegel. In the writings we possess, the new dialectic is without explicit ties to the dialectic of love. But one could, it seems, restore the connection as follows.

What is human about love is the fact that desire is not related directly (= 'immediately'; *unmittelbar*) to a natural empirical entity. The desire for this entity (the body) is 'mediated' (*vermittelt*) by the very desire of the one whom one desires: an animal desires the female (sexuality); a man desires the desire of the woman (eroticism). At the limit, amorous desire is a desire for love itself, the one who loves wants to be *loved*, and he can be 'satisfied' by this reciprocal love alone, without any 'materialization'. Now it is characteristic of love to attribute an absolute (= universal) value to the exclusive uniqueness (= 'particularity') of the one whom one loves ('there is no one but you on earth and in heaven'). To love is therefore to realize a synthesis of the particular (= Identity) and the universal (= Negativity, since universality is a *negation* of particularity); and it is to constitute oneself as such a synthesis, that is to say, as a 'totality'.

But in fact the amorous 'totality' is essentially *limited*. That is why, in the opinion of all, the existence of a man truly worthy of the name cannot be exhausted by amorous satisfactions. And that is why, in the opinion of Christians themselves, love is not, even in the universalized form of 'charity', the true mover of universal history. Love is essentially limited because it attributes an absolute value not to the action (*Tun*) but to the given-being (*Sein*) of the beloved: one loves someone 'without any reason', that is to say, simply because he *is*, and not because of what he does. Now given-being is limited by the very fact that it is given, that is to say, identical to itself and therefore different from all that is not it. Only negating action can surpass the limits which are opposed to it, and in this way universalize the very being of the one who acts and who creates himself through the active negation of the given-being which he himself is. Love, which is related to given-being, does not presuppose

action and does not engender truly active (= negating) behaviour. It therefore remains essentially passive, or better, ineffectual or inoperative. And it remains eternally limited by the static limits of the being to which it is related. This is why love can at the very most found a human Family, with a limited natural foundation (barely enlarged by a 'circle of friends') which, in the course of history, narrows as it evolves. It has never created a state in which citizens act with a view to its universal expansion.

In order to account for the phenomenon of history and of historical man, it is therefore necessary to replace the limited and passive dialectic of love by a universal dialectic of action. And that is what Hegel does by *universalizing* his first amorous dialectic. The 'lover' wants to be recognized as an absolute value by the beloved (*(par l'être aimé)*) (or, at the very most, by the necessarily restricted group of his 'relatives' and 'friends'). Historical man aspires to the *universal* recognition of the absolute value of his particularity: he wants to be 'the only one of his kind' and nevertheless 'universally valid'. And since the limits of his given-being, as well as the given structure of the natural and human world which surrounds him, oppose themselves to that *universal* recognition of his *particularity*, he transforms that world and transforms himself through a sequence of negating actions. These are the actions which gain him recognition, and it is as agent that he is recognized. It is the whole ((consisting)) of the negating actions of particulars accomplished with a view to universal recognition which constitutes the concrete content of universal history. And the true being of man is this historical *action*, which 'mediates' his natural given-being through the universalizing negation of his particularity.

Mr Niel is wrong when he says that the idea of this 'mediation' through history, that is to say, through the historical action of particulars for their universal recognition, only appears belatedly in Hegel's thought. According to Mr Niel, mediation through love is first replaced by 'psychological mediation' (*Phenomenology of Spirit*), then by mediation through 'speculative reflection' (*Logic and Encyclopaedia*), whereas the 'identity between logic and history' was only recognized by Hegel 'at the end'. Generally speaking, Mr Niel presents the chronological sequence of the writings which he summarizes as so many stages in the evolution of Hegelian thought. Now, in fact, this is not at all the case. The evolution of Hegel's thought is completed at the very moment at which he discovers (1800) the dialectic of Recognition (*Anerkennen*) or of Action (*Tat*), which he immediately substitutes for the dialectic of love. From that day on, during the thirty-two years which remained for him to live, Hegel did nothing but set forth the diverse complementary aspects of the dialectic, the general schema of which he discovered at the end of his juvenile period. He begins by describing the totality of the phenomenological aspect in his *Phenomenology*. Then, in the *Logic*, he completely

analyses the ontological aspect. Finally, the whole metaphysical aspect is given to us in the *Encyclopaedia*. As for later publications,² Hegel simultaneously describes in them the phenomenological, metaphysical and ontological aspects of the various 'constitutive elements' (*Momente*) of this same total dialectic which realizes itself as universal history; elements that are political, legal, aesthetic, religious and, finally, philosophical.

Having discovered the notion of Recognition, Hegel finds himself in possession of the key notion of his whole philosophy. Therefore it is through the analysis of this fundamental notion that one understands the arrangement of the different aspects and elements of the Hegelian dialectic, as well as the mutual relations between Hegel's philosophical writings.

The desire for recognition is in the final analysis the desire *for a desire*. For to want to be recognized as a value is to want to be 'desired' in the broad sense of the word ('admired', for example). Now every desire (hunger, for example) is not an empirical reality, but the presence of the absence of such a reality (of food, for example). If one acts on the basis of a desire for a desire, one therefore acts on the basis of what *does not* (yet) *exist* in the natural or given world. Thus, the being which creates itself in and through an action of this kind (or, better yet, as such an action) is itself a being which is non-natural, that is to say, which is 'spiritual' or human in the strong sense of the word. But the spiritual is only objectively real to the extent that it enters into inter-action with natural objective reality and can surpass (negate) it, should the occasion arise. Man is therefore real as human only to the extent that he *negates* himself as given, i.e. as 'natural' or animal, on the basis of the desire for recognition alone. In other words, man only realizes himself in and through the risk of his animal life incurred in the course of a fight for pure prestige. Now such a fight to the death (*Kampf auf Leben und Tod*) becomes necessary as soon as two desires for recognition meet each other. For if, in fact, one can only be satisfied if one is 'recognized' by someone whom one oneself 'recognizes', man does not know this at the beginning. At the beginning, one wants to be 'recognized' by all, without 'recognizing' anyone in return. And since, by definition, the desire for recognition is stronger than the animal instinct for self-preservation, both men, animated by the desire for one-sided recognition, will fight until one of them dies.

But the dead man no longer is, and one obviously cannot be recognized by what does not exist. In order for there to be actual recognition and therefore *objective reality* which is human (for man is only human, and at the same time 'objective', as 'recognized'), it is necessary that one of the adversaries consent to recognize the other without being recognized by him: one must submit to the other. This decision to interrupt the fight by submitting, although it takes place on the basis of the fear (*Furcht*)

of death, is just as 'free' (= unpredictable) or 'non-natural' as the decision to start the fight and to fight it to the finish. Nothing predisposes the future victor to victory, just as nothing predisposes the future vanquished to his defeat. It is through an act of absolute freedom that the adversaries are created as vanquished and victor, in and through a fight for prestige that is freely begun. And that is why the vanquished is just as human, though in a different way, as the victor himself: if one is the master, the other is the slave, and it is evident that there is neither mastery (*Herrschaft*) nor slavery (*Knechtschaft*) in the natural or animal world.

Man therefore does not constitute his humanity in isolation. By creating himself in and through a fight to the death for recognition, he necessarily comes out of it as the master of a slave, or as the slave of a master. And this means that this struggle creates human reality as an essentially *social* reality, in the precise sense of the word. But it also creates it as a *political* reality, for the man who is recognized by others in his human reality and dignity is by this very fact recognized politically: he is the citizen (*Bürger*) of the state formed by those who recognize him and whom he recognizes in turn.³

Finally, the reality constituted by the struggle for recognition is also a *legal* reality. For if this fight is started over a thing or a woman, it is not for the pure and simple possession of the thing or the woman that it is carried on (otherwise it would be a purely animal fight). The one fights against the other in order to make this other 'recognize' his 'exclusive right' to the thing or to the woman: man therefore fights in the final analysis for *right* ((*pour le droit*)). And that is why, at the end of the fight for recognition, the thing as legal *property* (legitimate wife) as well as man as owner (husband) or as 'legal person' ('*sujet juridique*') in general are created.

The analysis of the notion of Recognition therefore reveals to us the origin and the nature of the legal, political and social constitutive elements of human or historical existence. But this analysis makes us see and understand many other things as well.

In order to realize or 'objectify' one-sided recognition by the slave, the master compels the slave to *work* for him. This forced work for the exclusive profit of the master is accomplished against the natural instincts of the slave. This is therefore one more action which is 'against nature', that is to say, which is a 'spiritual' or specifically human action. And it is this essentially human Work (*Arbeit*) which trans-forms the very essence of the natural world by creating in the midst of nature the *technical* world within which universal history unfolds.

By working, man opposes himself to nature, because he trans-forms it, that is to say, negates it as given. And one can say that by working man opposes himself to nature in the way that the 'subject' opposes itself to the 'object' while standing in a relation to it. For the slave works at

the command of the master. Now, what is natural desire in the master (desire to eat, for example) is only an 'abstract idea' in the slave, who acts in order to satisfy a desire without feeling it himself. He therefore works as a consequence of something unreal, of an idea which is a project to be realized. And that is why his work essentially transforms the natural given. Consequently, wherever there is work properly so called, there is necessarily Understanding (*Verstand*) also, i.e. the capacity for abstract notions, or if you prefer, for discursive Thought (*Denken, Sprache*). Man speaks while working. He speaks about his work and with a view to his work, and the whole ((consisting)) of these laborious discourses constitutes the vulgar (non-philosophical) *sciences* of the world and of man, sciences which are all more or less 'technical': they issue from work and finally end in work.

But, in speaking, the slave does not limit himself to describing the given world for the sake of transforming it through work. Not being recognized, not being, therefore, satisfied by and in the world, he *criticizes* it in his discourses or 'negates' it verbally. And he constructs an imaginary world in its place, which is in conformity with his ideal of as yet unrealized satisfaction. It is in this way that the man who works in slavery necessarily forges the fictitious ideal universe of *art* and of *religion*. And that world evolves parallel to the real world in which the ideal is realized. Thus universal history, which is born from the 'first' fight for recognition and which continues for as long as the desire for recognition is not fully satisfied, is not only a history of work, but also one of scientific and critical thought, as well as of art in all its forms and of religions.

But, basically, history is the history of bloody fights for pure prestige carried on with a view to universal recognition. On the one hand, each master seeks to be recognized by *all* men. And so the 'state' of which he is a citizen is essentially warlike and aspires to universal empire. On the other hand, the slave does not content himself endlessly with the imaginary satisfactions that art and the religious beyond give him. He tries to make his masters recognize him. He therefore seeks to suppress them as masters. And that is why states in which there are slaves of any kind whatever (that is to say, 'classes') are the arena of bloody fights which have as their goal the establishment of social *homogeneity*. History is therefore a more or less uninterrupted sequence of foreign wars and bloody revolutions. But this sequence has an aim, and consequently an end. For being born from the desire for recognition, history will necessarily stop at the moment at which this desire will be fully satisfied. Now this desire will be satisfied when each will be recognized in his reality and in his human dignity by *all* the others, these others being recognized by each in their reality and dignity ((a reality and dignity which are recognized as being)) equal to his own. In other words, history will stop when man will be perfectly satisfied by the fact of being a recognized

citizen of a *universal and homogeneous state*, or, if you prefer, of a classless society comprising the whole of humanity.

The history which Hegel has in view is therefore 'history' in the common sense of the term: political, social, economic history. And the history of the sciences, the arts and the religions is only, for Hegel, the history of 'ideologies' which are born from the real historical process: they are a sort of ideal 'superstructure' which only has a meaning and a possibility of being on the basis of a real 'infrastructure', formed by the whole ((consisting)) of the political and social fights and works accomplished by man. But while stressing this, if you please, 'materialistic' aspect of the Hegelian dialectic (which determined the whole thought of Marx), it should not be forgotten that this historical dialectic is, for Hegel, something essentially other than fight and work, than science, art and religion.

It is evident that the reality which is born from the desire for recognition and which realizes itself and objectifies itself through the fight for recognition can only be a reality *conscious of itself*. For it is evident that one can be truly 'recognized' only if one oneself knows that one is recognized. (One never 'recognizes' an animal or a thing, although one can very well *love* them.) That is why, by saying that man *is* Recognition, Hegel is also saying that he *is* self-consciousness (*Selbstbewusstsein*, which, of course, implies and presupposes the consciousness of the external world, *Bewusstsein*). In other words, the satisfaction which the citizen of the universal and homogeneous state derives from his recognized perfection is not 'immediate' but 'mediated' by the fullness of self-consciousness (and that is precisely why this satisfaction is truly human): man can only be perfectly satisfied if he is fully conscious of his satisfaction. Now, just as the real perfection of the citizen is the result of the whole historical evolution previous to his advent, so too the fullness of his self-consciousness is nothing but the integration of the (('experiences' of)) becoming conscious previously accomplished in the course of history. Universal history is therefore, in the final analysis, the history of self-consciousness. Man fights and works to realize himself, but he only realizes himself in order to become conscious of himself by revealing himself to himself and to others through a coherent discourse having a meaning. Thus, history will stop at the very moment at which man becomes fully self-conscious.

To be sure, the fullness of self-consciousness can only be attained at the moment at which man is fully satisfied by his real existence. For as long as he is not ((satisfied)) he negates himself, transforms himself, becomes other than he is, and therefore other than the one of whom he had become conscious. His objective (historical) reality will surpass his self-consciousness and the latter will not be truly complete or total, that is to say, enclosed upon itself. As long as there will be a possibility of

negation or of action, there will always be something unconscious in man. But it is nevertheless true that the final aim, and consequently the prime mover, of historical (= dialectical) motion is satisfaction conscious of itself. Man seeks to be perfect only in order to be satisfied in the full consciousness of his perfection. He changes and moves only in order to go towards the fullness of consciousness.

Now the fullness of consciousness is called *Wisdom*, and the motion which leads to it through the progressive extension of self-consciousness is called *Philosophy*. One can therefore say that, in the final analysis, universal history is the history of philosophy, which leads to the absolute Knowledge (*absolute Wissen*) of the Wise Man. If perfection that cannot be surpassed is synonymous with self-conscious Satisfaction, and if the latter is synonymous with omniscient Wisdom, one can say that history, once it is completed as a whole, is only there so that the Wise Man (named Hegel in this case) can objectify absolute Knowledge in the form of a book entitled *System of Science*.

This System is divided into two parts. In the first, which is at the same time an Introduction to the System, the Wise Man becomes fully self-conscious by rethinking the whole historical process which has given birth to him and which he integrates (by rethinking it); or, if you prefer, by describing the phenomenological aspect of the total dialectic. This first part is the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. And the second part is the exposition of the Science itself, that is to say, the description of the ontological aspects (in the *Logic*) and metaphysical aspects (in the *Realphilosophie*, subdivided into the *Philosophy of Nature* and the *Philosophie des Geistes*) of the same dialectic that had been described, as 'appearing' or revealed through the self-consciousness of the Wise Man, in the first part.

Thus, contrary to what Mr Niel thinks (see pp. 16ff.), the 'mediation' through the 'speculative reflection' of the *Logic* and the *Encyclopaedia* does not differ essentially from the 'psychological mediation' through the *Phenomenology*. These are three aspects of one and the same thing, namely, of the 'mediation' of given-being through thought fully conscious of itself, which is born, in the final analysis, from the desire for recognition, when this desire is fully and definitively satisfied by the whole ((consisting)) of the works and fights which constitute universal political history, the latter being also the history of art, of religion and of philosophy.

In this last 'mediation' through Hegelian Science, human reality becomes fully self-conscious. It therefore understands itself and reveals itself as it is in reality, that is to say, as essentially finite and mortal, since it was created, in the beginning, in and through an actual risk of life at the time of the 'first' fight for recognition. In knowing itself to be mortal, it knows itself to live in a world without a beyond (*Jenseits*) or without God.

And so, what is most curious of all, man completes himself and perfects himself, that is to say, attains supreme satisfaction, through the (('experience" of)) becoming conscious, in the person of the Wise Man, of his essential finitude. For it is by knowing himself to be mortal, it is by accepting the idea of his death that the man who has become a Wise Man knows himself to be the absolute Spirit which has nothing beyond itself. And it is precisely this *absolute* or 'universal' value which the 'particularity' of the Wise Man possesses, ((a particularity that is)) objective in its Science which *is* the Truth, that constitutes the final 'justification' of man, by revealing the profound meaning of all the 'apparent absurdities of his historical past ((which has)) vanished for ever'.

Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht. Universal history, which is at the same time the supreme Tribunal, acquits man in its final judgment, which is the only valid ((judgment)) because it is the only ((judgment that is)) possible and real. Now it is man who sits in this Tribunal, and he is the same as the one who is acquitted. And the man who succeeds in fully justifying himself to himself is perfectly satisfied by what he *is*. He will therefore not have any reason to change any more or to gainsay himself, so that all that he has said about himself, and therefore about man in general, in the fullness of his consciousness, will remain true for ever. And that is why he *is* the Truth.

Mr Niel does not acknowledge the essentially atheistic character of Hegel's dialectical philosophy. He does not see that this philosophy excludes by its very nature every kind of 'transmundane' transcendence. And this is why, in his interpretation, he cannot bring himself to ascribe to history all the importance that it has in genuine Hegelian thought.

To be sure, Mr Niel admits that for Hegel 'history alone is the place of Spirit' (p. 299). He also acknowledges that, in the Hegelian (= dialectical) conception, history must necessarily have an end (p. 300). Finally, he knows that it is precisely the advent of Hegel's (dialectical) philosophy that marks the end of the historical process, 'because through it becoming thinks itself as becoming' (p. 368). But Mr Niel nevertheless speaks of a 'divine' or 'eternal' Spirit which is real outside of time and which only 'incarnates' itself in history (see, for example, pp. 252 and 357). He distinguishes 'temporal becoming' from 'eternal becoming' (p. 181), the 'essentially historical domain of activity' of the Spirit from its 'supra-historical' activity (p. 180). He thinks he finds, in the *Phenomenology*, not an end properly so called of history, but a kind of 'eternal return', man being condemned 'to repeat endlessly the series of forms through which he manifested himself' (p. 181). And Hegelian philosophy for him is not only the integration of the historical process but also 'a transcendence ((*dépassement*)) of history' (p. 114).

Now, in fact, there can be no question in Hegel of a 'transcendence'

((*dépassement*)) properly so called. Hegelian philosophy is, if you please, 'beyond' history in the sense that it does not mark the beginning of a new historical period. Being an adequate description of the real, it negates nothing and therefore creates nothing real: it does not have a real or historical future before it. But it nevertheless forms part of the historical process, as its final point. Not only because it constitutes itself in time at an historical moment which it describes: it is nothing but 'history conceptually understood' (*begriffene Geschichte*), that is to say, ((history)) described in its aspects: phenomenological, metaphysical and ontological. And it is exclusively this (phenomenological) description which constitutes the 'eternal return' that Mr Niel has in mind: after the end of history, man can do nothing but perpetually rethink the historical process which has been completed and 'understood' by the Wise Man (= Hegel).

As to notions such as 'divine' or 'eternal' Spirit, 'eternal becoming', 'supra-historical activity' etc. – they simply do not exist in Hegel. For Hegel 'Spirit is Time' (*Geist ist Zeit*), and time is 'the concept which empirically exists' (*der daseiende Begriff selbst*). There is therefore neither creative activity (= negation) nor conceptual thought outside of time. What is 'outside' of time is at the very most space, i.e. the purely natural world, or static Being (*Sein*). Now static Being, since it is pure *identity*, does not *differ* from anything ((*ne diffère de rien*)). It also, therefore, is not different from 'nothing' itself ((*Il n'est donc pas non plus différent du 'rien' lui-même*)) or from Nothingness (*Nichts*). And that is why one can say that there is nothing outside of time, the 'nothing' or Nothingness only being 'something' in the form of time which realizes itself in the midst of space, of nature, or of Being – as real or historical, viz. human, time.

Now if this is the case, the very criterion of truth has, in Hegel, an historical character. If history has an end, it is not because this end is affirmed or 'demonstrated' by Hegelian philosophy, which is true 'in itself' (or with respect to an eternal or divine truth). On the contrary, if this philosophy is true, it is exclusively because history has come to an end, it is because man no longer negates, no longer trans-forms the real revealed by the final philosophy, which, by this very fact, is no longer philosophy or quest for truth, but truth itself or Wisdom (absolute Knowledge).

Not seeing this 'temporal' or historical character of Hegelian truth, which is *absolute* truth only because it is the *final* truth, Mr Niel does not see the decisive importance which the *fact* of the end of history and of the man who, according to him, was the incarnation of this end, i.e. Napoleon, had for Hegel.

To be sure, Mr Niel knows that Hegel was a fervent admirer of Napoleon and that he was 'grief-stricken by his fall' (p. 268); but he says only in passing, and in a hesitating manner, that Napoleon is the result,

the completion and the realization of the French Revolution (p. 165, note 84); and that the 'kingdom of God on earth' that Hegel has in mind is nothing but the Napoleonic Empire (p. 182). And, above all, he does not understand the true meaning of the last section of chapter VI of the *Phenomenology*, which is of decisive importance.

As Mr Niel sees very well, Chapter VI is devoted to a (phenomenological) description of the whole historical process from the Greek city to 1806. The second section (B) ends with an analysis of the Revolution of 1789 and announces – which Mr Niel does not clearly see – the advent of the Napoleonic Empire, that is to say, of the 'universal and homogeneous' state. As for the last section (C), it is indeed devoted, as Mr Niel says, to an analysis of Kantian and post-Kantian German philosophy. But Mr Niel does not notice that this philosophy is presented as a process which prepares for the advent of the philosophy of Hegel himself, and that the latter has as its essential aim to 'explain' Napoleon, or to 'justify' his Empire, by presenting it as the completion of universal history.

It is in the last paragraph of chapter VI that Hegel speaks of his own philosophy (as resulting from the evolution of post-Kantian philosophy), in the paragraph which one could entitle (with Mr Niel and following Lasson) 'Evil and its pardon'. Mr Niel tells us that in this paragraph Hegel 'abandons history properly so called in order to seek the metaphysical meaning [?] of concrete attitudes which belong to all times' (p. 174). Now, in fact, this is not at all the case. Hegel speaks there of himself as speaking of Napoleon. The 'evil' in question is the supposed political 'crime' of Napoleon, and the 'pardon' is the justification of Napoleon's achievement ((*l'œuvre napoléonienne*)) by Hegel's philosophy, or, more precisely, by his *Phenomenology*. The 'acting consciousness' (see p. 175) is Napoleon as the 'result' of universal history, and the 'judging consciousness' is Hegel, the 'judge' of Napoleon and of history, as the 'result' of German philosophy, and, therefore, of the whole history of philosophy.

As long as one does not know that the unique theme of the paragraph is Napoleon and his critics, its content remains strictly unintelligible.⁴ Thus Mr Niel's summary of it (pp. 174ff.) is purely verbal and tolerably obscure, not to say devoid of meaning. In any case, the true meaning of the passage, which completes the paragraph and the chapter, and which is reproduced at the end of Mr Niel's summary (p. 176), completely escapes the reader who does not know the text and the context. Now this passage is the most remarkable of all.

In this passage Hegel speaks of the existence of 'both I', and he says this about them:

The *Yes* of reconciliation in which both I desist from their opposed *empirical-existence* (*Dasein*) is the empirical existence of the I extended to duality, of the I which remains equal in itself there: and which, in its

complete alienation and in its contrary, has self-certainty; this empirical existence is the God who manifests himself in the midst of those who know themselves as pure knowledge.

The 'yes of reconciliation' is the very content of the paragraph, in which Hegel 'reconciles' Germany, and himself as a German, with Napoleon. After this 'reconciliation', the I of Hegel is no longer really 'opposed' to the I of Napoleon. On the one hand, because in the universal and homogeneous state Hegel the citizen and Napoleon the emperor cease to be German and French in order to become men plain and simple. On the other hand, because the philosophy of Hegel is a becoming conscious of Napoleon. By understanding Napoleon as the completion of history, Hegel understands *man* as such and therefore the man he himself is: the consciousness of the external (*Bewusstsein*) thus coincides with self-consciousness (*Selbstbewusstsein*). It is in Napoleon that Hegel finds 'self-certainty'. He is sure of being a Wise Man possessing absolute Knowledge because, thanks to Napoleon, the reality which he describes is definitively completed. And since Napoleon (being originally, before the 'reconciliation', a Frenchman who is an *enemy* of the German) is really *other* than Hegel, Hegelian thought, which accounts for Napoleon, is more than a 'subjective certainty' (*Gewissheit*): it is the revelation of an 'objective-reality' (*Wirklichkeit*), that is to say, a *truth* (*Wahrheit*). Now the (Napoleonic) reality which it *reveals* is completed in itself. It is therefore perfect or absolute and, at the same time (thanks to Hegel), perfectly conscious of itself. It therefore is the absolute Spirit, the Spirit which Christians call 'God'. And that is why one can say that Napoleon is the 'appearing' or 'revealed' 'God' (*der erscheinende Gott*), 'revealing' himself to or through Hegel and his disciples, that is to say, to and through those who know that they are henceforth only 'pure knowledge', that is to say, the 'absolute Knowledge' which negates nothing, and therefore creates nothing, but reveals perfectly the zeal which is fully completed in and through its finished historical becoming.⁵

Mr Niel is therefore right when he says that, for Hegel, 'Christ is the perfect' dialectical 'mediator' (p. 109). But in order for his assertion to be really true, he should have added that the Christ whom Hegel has in mind is not Jesus. The Gospel account is only the myth of Christ, or, if you please, his project (= ideal to be realized). The Christ who empirically exists, the God who actually reveals himself to men, the Logos truly become flesh – is the dyad Napoleon-Hegel, is the man completing historical evolution through a bloody battle (*lutte*) coupled with the man revealing through his discourse the meaning of this evolution.

Now Mr Niel does not say that (even though he mentions, p. 369, the analogy between Christ and Hegel). He cannot say that because, not having understood the essentially atheistic character of Hegelian (= dia-

lectual) philosophy, he does not see the decisive role which the real completion (= Napoleon) of concrete history plays in it. Inversely, not seeing that 'absolute Spirit' is nothing but the history of man completed by a man (or by two men), he can attempt to give a theistic interpretation of the Hegelian Spirit.

One might even assume that Mr Niel, following most other interpreters of Hegel, refuses to acknowledge Hegelian atheism precisely because this 'trans-Christian' atheism preserves the idea of Christ, by applying it to a man properly so called, 'conceived in sin' and radically mortal.⁶ For it is very difficult even for an atheist to really take seriously this paradoxical and yet necessary consequence of Hegelianism (and probably of any 'dialectical' philosophy, or even of any consistent or coherent atheism that does not want to founder in relativism). As for the believer, he must – unconsciously – recoil from the enormity of this blasphemy and try to deny its existence: even if the blasphemy is uttered by another; even if he knows or believes he knows that this other is grossly mistaken.

However that may be, Mr Niel wants to hear nothing of Hegelian atheism, or of the Napoleonic 'theandry'. On the contrary, he believes that he finds the Christ of the Gospels again in Hegel, and he goes so far as to say (p. 329) that Hegel was less a philosopher than a theologian.⁷

And yet, Mr Niel is very suspicious of the alleged Hegelian theology. He senses an enemy in it, and a particularly formidable enemy. Thus, he ends the summaries of what he believes to be the 'stages' of Hegelian thought by affirming the 'failure' of the examined attempt at 'mediation'. And the entire book ends with a paragraph entitled: 'The failure' (p. 376).

Now, in my opinion, the alleged 'failure' of Hegel is affirmed rather than demonstrated by Mr Niel. One has the impression that he wanted to present the enemy as beaten before having even started the fight and perhaps precisely in order to avoid starting it. But the last critical paragraph of the book nevertheless does raise some questions which deserve to be considered.

Mr Niel tells us that 'the only possible refutation of Hegelianism' is of necessity historical. In this he is profoundly Hegelian (= 'dialectical'), and I would be the last to raise any objections whatsoever against him. But when he says that this refutation has already been made, because history did not stop with Hegel, I would like to put some objections to him.

Mr Niel rightly does not follow those who want to 'refute' Hegel by alleging the fact of Kierkegaard's existence against him. For the existence of Kierkegaard does not, in fact, 'refute' anything at all, given that he was duly described and 'refuted' through the description of real historical overcoming ((*dépassement*)) in the *Phenomenology*. Mr Niel, still a good Hegelian, alleges, in opposition to Hegel's claim to have enunciated the absolute truth, the fact of the immediate appearance of a Hegelian 'Left'

and of a Hegelian 'Right', which continue to confront each other down to the present. And this 'objection' is, indeed, valid, even from the Hegelian or 'dialectical' point of view. But one would have to state precisely what merit this 'objection' really has.

I would like to point out, in the first place (without knowing whether Mr Niel shares my point of view), that if there has been from the beginning a Hegelian Left and Right, this is also *all* that there has been since Hegel. For if one abstracts from the remnants of the past which Hegel knew and described ('liberalism' included), and which, consequently, cannot be alleged in opposition to him as an historical or 'dialectical' refutation, one observes that there has been strictly nothing outside of Hegelianism (whether conscious or not), whether on the plane of historical reality itself, or on that of such thought or discourse as has had historical repercussions. And so one cannot say, with Mr Niel, that history has refuted *Hegelianism*. The most one can assert is that it has not decided between the 'Leftist' and the 'Rightist' interpretations of Hegelian philosophy. For today the discussion still continues.

Now, according to Hegel, a discussion can only be settled by reality, that is to say, by the realization of one of the theses that confront each other. Verbal polemics or 'dialectics' only reflect the real dialectic, which is a dialectic of Action manifesting itself as struggle ((*lutte*)) and work. And in effect it is as work ('economic system'), revolutions and wars that the polemic between 'Hegelians' has been taking place for nearly 150 years. Recently the Left has won a brilliant victory, and it would be absurd to conclude from it that it is the 'right' that will finally win. But it would be just as false to say that the provisionally victorious interpretation has definitively proved itself to be true.

In our time, as in the time of Marx, Hegelian philosophy is not a truth in the proper sense of the term: it is less the adequate discursive revelation of a reality than an idea or an ideal, that is to say, a 'project' which is to be realized, and therefore proved true, through action. However, what is remarkable is that it is precisely because it is not yet true that this philosophy alone is capable of *becoming* true one day. For it alone says that truth is created in time out of error and that there are no 'transcendent' criteria (whereas a theistic theory of necessity either has always been true, or is for ever false). And that is why history will never refute Hegelianism, but will limit itself to choosing between its two opposed interpretations.

One can therefore say that, for the moment, every interpretation of Hegel, if it is more than idle talk, is nothing but a programme of struggle ((*lutte*)) and one of work (and one of these 'programmes' is called *Marxism*). And this means that the work of an interpreter of Hegel takes on the meaning of a work of political propaganda. Mr Niel therefore quite rightly says, in concluding, that 'Hegelianism is of more than purely

literary interest'. For it may be that, in fact, the future of the world, and therefore the meaning of the present and the significance of the past, depend, in the final analysis, on the way in which the Hegelian writings are interpreted today.

This last remark may perhaps justify the unusual length of the present review in the reader's eyes.

Notes

* Translator's note: double brackets and double parentheses represent insertions by the translator. Other brackets and parentheses are reproduced from the original. In the places where *lutte* could not be translated by 'fight' and *dépasser* by 'surpass' the French words have been supplied between double parentheses or double brackets. James H. Nichols' recent translation of Kojève (*Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*), ed. Allan Bloom (New York, 1969) has furnished the translator with many useful suggestions. Jonathan Mandelbaum's helpful advice is also gratefully acknowledged.

1. Suicide à la Kirilov, i.e. a death which is voluntarily and consciously self-inflicted without any *external cause*, limits the omnipotence of all those who are not the one who commits suicide; and therefore also the omnipotence of 'God', who thus ceases to be 'divine'. For that only is 'divine' which can act on me without my being able to act on it or against it in such a way that the action would be equal to the reaction.

2. Apart from the *Philosophy of Right*, they consist mainly of lecture notes edited by Hegel's students and published after his death. One therefore cannot consider these writings as strictly genuine. It is therefore inadmissible, as has been done only too often, to found an interpretation of the whole of Hegelian thought on them. This remark, moreover, does not apply to Mr Niel.

3. In truth, Hegel does not explain how a Master can be recognized by another master. In other words, he does not explain the genesis of the state. And that is the most important gap in his phenomenology. One could, however, allow that the state is born from the mutual recognition of the victors of a *collective* fight for recognition. If several men fight together against common adversaries whom they end by enslaving, they can mutually recognize each other as masters without having fought among themselves. 'Fellow citizen' would therefore be at the beginning identical to 'brother-in-arms'. But there is also the phenomenon of the political 'leader' (('chef')) which Hegel does not analyse in his writings: the superiority (= authority) of one of the masters can be recognized by the others without their becoming his slaves as a result of this.

4. The passages on the 'wounds of the spirit' which 'leave no scars', and on the 'king' and the *valet de chambre* remain particularly unintelligible. The 'wound' in question is the defeat inflicted by Napoleon on Germany, which (('country')) Hegel advises to integrate itself willingly into the universal Empire that Napoleon is in the process of realizing; the *valets* – they are the essentially 'hypocritical' critics of Napoleon.

5. In a famous letter quoted by Mr Niel (p. 268), Hegel says that having finished the *Phenomenology*, he saw at dawn the 'soul of the world' ride on horseback under his windows. This text is revealing. The victor of Jena is called in it the '*soul of the world*': he is *Welt*-seele, and not *Volks*-seele; he incorporates

not the history of the French people, but that of the whole of humanity. But he is *Welt-seele* and not *Welt-geist*. He is not Spirit, because he is not fully self-conscious; through his actions he in fact completes history, but he does not know that he is doing this and that he realizes absolute Spirit by doing it. It is Hegel who knows this and who says it in the *Phenomenology*. Absolute Spirit or 'God' is therefore neither Napoleon nor Hegel, but Napoleon-understood-by-Hegel or Hegel-understanding-Napoleon.

6. I do not dwell on the very significant modifications that Hegel had to make in his conception as a consequence of Napoleon's fall. That he thought at a given moment that he could substitute the Archduke of Austria for his 'Napoleon', or that he ended by pretending to believe that the perfect and definitive state begun by Napoleon was realized by the kingdom of Prussia, which, however, was not 'universal' and did not aspire to universality, matters little. What matters is that, according to him, Napoleon disappeared because he had (virtually) ended his work and that this work definitively completed history properly so called ((i.e. history as)) creative of new historical 'worlds'. In any case, it is therefore man plain and simple, and not the Man-God, who realizes perfection.

7. In a certain sense this is, moreover, true. But this sense can only be an ironic one. If Hegel did, indeed, concern himself with *theo*-logy all his life, this was exclusively with a view to 'surpressing' it definitively as *theo*-logy or as the science of a God who is transcendent with respect to man.

Hegel, death and sacrifice¹ (1955)

Georges Bataille

The animal dies. But the death of the animal is the becoming of consciousness.

I Death

Man's Negativity

In the *Lectures* of 1805–6, at the moment of his thought's full maturity, during the period when he was writing *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel expressed in these terms the black character of humanity:

Man is that night, that empty Nothingness, which contains everything in its undivided simplicity: the wealth of an infinite number of representations, of images, not one of which comes precisely to mind, or which [moreover], are not [there] in so far as they are really present. It is the night, the interiority – or – the intimacy of nature which exists here: [*the*] pure personal-Ego. In phantasmagorical representations it is night on all sides: here suddenly surges up a blood-spattered head; there, another, white, apparition; and they disappear just as abruptly. That is the night that one perceives if one looks a man in the eyes: then one is delving into a night which becomes terrible; it is the night of the world which then presents itself to us.²

Of course, this 'beautiful text', where Hegel's Romanticism finds expression, is not to be understood loosely. If Hegel was a Romantic, it was perhaps in a *fundamental* manner (he was at any rate a Romantic at the beginning – in his youth – when he was a commonplace revolutionary), but he did not see in Romanticism the method by which a proud spirit deems itself capable of subordinating the real world to the arbitrar-

iness of its own dreams. Alexander Kojève, in citing them, says of these lines that they express 'the central and final idea of Hegelian philosophy', which is 'the idea that the foundation and the source of human objective reality (*Wirklichkeit*) and empirical existence (*Dasein*) are the Nothingness which manifests itself as negative or creative Action, free and self-conscious'.

To permit access to Hegel's disconcerting world, I have felt obliged to mark, by a careful examination, both its violent contrasts and its ultimate unity.

For Kojève, 'the "dialectical" or anthropological philosophy of Hegel is in the final analysis a *philosophy of death* (or, which is the same thing, of atheism)' (K. 537; TEL, 539).

But if man is 'death living a human life' (K, 548; TEL, 550), man's negativity, given in death by virtue of the fact that man's death is essentially voluntary (resulting from risks assumed without necessity, without biological reasons), is nevertheless the principle of action. Indeed, for Hegel, Action is Negativity, and Negativity Action. On the one hand, the man who negates nature – by introducing into it, like a flip-side, the anomaly of a 'pure, personal ego' – is present within that nature's heart like a night within light, like an intimacy within the exteriority of those things which are *in themselves* – like a phantasmagoria in which nothing takes shape but to evanesce, nothing appears but to disappear, where nothing exists except absorbed without respite in the *annihilation* of time, from which it draws the beauty of a dream. But there is a complementary aspect: this negation of nature is not merely given in consciousness – where that which exists *in itself* appears (but only to disappear) – this negation is exteriorized, and in being exteriorized, really (*in itself*) changes the reality of nature. Man works and fights; he transforms the given; he transforms nature, and in destroying it he creates a world, a world which was not. On the one hand there is poetry, the destruction that has surged up and diluted itself, a *blood-spattered* head; on the other hand there is Action, work, struggle. On the one hand, 'pure Nothingness', where man 'differs from Nothingness only *for a certain time*' (K, 573; TEL, 575). On the other, a historical World, where man's Negativity, that Nothingness that gnaws him from within, creates the whole of concrete reality (at once object and subject, real world changed or unchanged, man who thinks and changes the world).

*Hegel's philosophy is a philosophy of death – or of atheism*³

The essential – and the original – characteristic of Hegelian philosophy is to describe the totality of what is; and, consequently, at the same time that it accounts for everything which appears before our eyes, to give an integrated account of the thought and language which express – and reveal – that appearance.

'In my opinion', says Hegel, 'Everything depends on one's expressing and understanding Truth not (only) as substance, but also as subject.'⁴

In other words, natural knowledge is incomplete; it does not and cannot envisage any but abstract entities, isolated from a whole, from an indissoluble totality, which alone is concrete. Knowledge must at the same time be anthropological: 'in addition to the ontological bases of natural reality', Kojève writes, '[knowledge] must find those of human reality, which alone is capable of being revealed through Discourse' (K, 528; TEL, 530). Of course, this anthropology does not envisage Man as do the modern sciences but as a movement impossible to isolate from the heart of the totality. In a sense, it is actually a theology, where man has taken the place of God.

But for Hegel, the human reality which he places at the heart, and centre, of the totality is very different from that of Greek philosophy. His anthropology is that of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, which emphasizes man's *liberty*, *historicity* and *individuality*. Like Judaeo-Christian man, the Hegelian man is a spiritual (i.e. 'dialectical') being. Yet, for the Judaeo-Christian world, 'spirituality' is fully realized and manifest only in the hereafter, and Spirit properly speaking, truly 'objectively real' Spirit, is God: 'an infinite and eternal being'. According to Hegel, the 'spiritual' or 'dialectical' being is 'necessarily *temporal* and finite'. This means that death alone assures the existence of a 'spiritual' or 'dialectical' being, in the Hegelian sense. If the animal which constitutes man's natural being did not die, and – what is more – if death did not dwell in him as the source of his anguish – and all the more so in that he seeks it out, desires it and sometimes freely chooses it – there would be no man or liberty, no history or individual. In other words, if he revels in what none the less frightens him, if he is the being, identical with himself, who risks (identical) being itself, then man is truly a man: he separates himself from the animal. Henceforth he is no longer, like a stone, an immutable given: he bears within him *Negativity*; and the force, the violence of negativity cast him into the incessant movement of history, which changes him and which alone realizes the totality of the concrete real through time. Only history has the power to finish what is, to finish it in the passage of time. And so the idea of an eternal and immutable God is in this perspective merely a provisional end, which survives while awaiting something better. Only completed history and the spirit of the Sage (of Hegel) – in whom history revealed, then revealed in full, the development of being and the totality of its becoming – occupy a sovereign position, which God only provisionally occupies, as a regent.

The tragi-comic aspect of man's divinity

This way of seeing things can with justice be considered comic. Besides, Hegel never expressed it explicitly. The texts where it is *implicitly*

affirmed are ambiguous, and their extreme difficulty ultimately kept them from full consideration. Kojève himself is circumspect. He does not dwell on them and avoids drawing precise conclusions. In order to express appropriately the situation Hegel got himself into, no doubt involuntarily, one would need the tone, or at least, in a restrained form, the horror of tragedy. But things would quickly take on a comic appearance.

Be that as it may, to pass through death is so absent from the divine figure that a myth situated in the tradition associated death, and the agony of death, with the eternal and unique God of the Judaeo-Christian sphere. The death of Jesus partakes of comedy to the extent that one cannot unarbitrarily introduce the forgetting of his eternal divinity – which is his – into the consciousness of an omnipotent and infinite God. Before Hegel's 'absolute knowledge', the Christian myth was already based precisely on the fact that nothing divine is possible (in the pre-Christian sense of *sacred*) which is finite. But the vague consciousness in which the (Christian) myth of the death of God took form differed, none the less, from that of Hegel: in order to misrepresent a figure of God that limited the infinite as the totality, it was possible to add on, in contradiction with its basis, a movement towards the finite.

Hegel was able – and it was necessary for him – to add up the sum (the totality) of the movements which were produced in history. But humour, it seems, is incompatible with work and its necessary assiduity. I shall return to this subject; I have merely, for the moment, shuffled cards. . . . It is difficult to pass from humanity humiliated by divine grandeur to that . . . of the apotheosized and sovereign Sage, his pride swollen with human vanity.

A fundamental text

In what I have written up to this point, only one necessity emerges in a precise fashion: there can be authentic Wisdom (absolute Wisdom, or in general anything approaching it) only if the Sage raises himself, if I can put it this way, to the height of death, at whatever anguish to him.

A passage from the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*⁵ forcefully expresses the necessity of such an attitude. There is no doubt from the start of the 'capital importance' of this admirable text, not only for an understanding of Hegel, but in all regards.

'Death', writes Hegel,

– if we wish so to name that unreality – is the most terrible thing there is and to uphold the work of death is the task which demands the greatest strength. Impotent beauty hates this awareness, because understanding makes this demand of beauty, a requirement which beauty cannot fulfill. Now, the life of Spirit is not that life which is frightened of death, and spares itself destruction, but that life which

assumes death and lives with it. Spirit attains its truth only by finding itself in absolute dismemberment. It is not that (prodigious) power by being the Positive that turns away from the Negative, as when we say of something: this is nothing or (this is) false and, having (thus) disposed of it, pass from there to something else; no, Spirit is that power only to the degree in which it contemplates the Negative face to face (and) dwells with it. This prolonged sojourn is the magical force which transposes the negative into given-Being.

The human negation of nature and of the natural being of man

In principle, I ought to have started the passage just cited at an earlier point. I did not want to weigh this text down by giving the 'enigmatic' lines which precede it. But I shall sketch out the sense of the omitted lines by restating Kojève's interpretation, without which the consequences, in spite of an appearance of relative clarity, would remain closed to us.

For Hegel, it is both fundamental and altogether worthy of astonishment that human understanding (that is language, discourse) should have had the force (an incomparable force) to separate its constitutive elements from the totality. These elements (this tree, this bird, this stone) are in fact inseparable from the whole. They are 'bound together by spatial and temporal, indeed material, bonds which are indissoluble'. Their separation implies the human Negativity towards nature of which I spoke, without pointing out its decisive consequences. For the man who negates nature could not in any way live outside of it. He is not merely a man who negates nature, he is first of all an animal, that is to say, the very thing he negates: he cannot therefore negate nature without negating himself. The intrinsic totality of man is reflected in Kojève's bizarre expression, that totality is first of all nature (natural being), it is 'the anthropomorphic animal' (nature, the animal indissolubly linked to the whole of nature, and which supports man). Thus human Negativity, man's effective desire to negate nature in destroying it – in reducing it to his own ends, as when, for example, he makes a tool of it (and the tool will be the model of an object isolated from nature) – cannot stop at man himself; in so far as he is nature, man is exposed to his own negativity. To negate nature is to negate the animal which props up man's Negativity. It is undoubtedly not the understanding, breaker of nature's unity, which seeks man's death, and yet the separating action of the understanding implies the monstrous energy of thought, of the 'pure abstract I', which is essentially opposed to fusion, to the inseparable character of the elements – constitutive of the whole – which firmly upholds their separation.

It is the very separation of man's being, it is his isolation from nature, and, consequently, his isolation in the midst of his own kind, which condemn him to disappear definitively. The animal, negating nothing,

lost in a global animality to which it offers no opposition – just as that animality is itself lost in nature (and in the totality of all that is) – does not truly disappear . . . No doubt the individual fly dies, but today's flies are the same as those of last year. Last year's have died? . . . Perhaps, but *nothing* has disappeared. The flies remain, equal to themselves like the waves of the sea. This seems contrived: a biologist can separate a fly from the swarm; all it takes is a brushstroke. But he separates it *for himself*; he does not separate it for the flies. To separate itself from the others a fly would need the monstrous force of the understanding; then it would name itself and do what the understanding normally effects by means of language, which alone founds the separation of elements and by founding it founds itself on it, within a world formed of separated and denominated entities. But in this game the human animal finds death; it finds precisely human death, the only one which frightens, which freezes – but which only frightens and transfixes the man who is absorbed in his future disappearance, to the extent that he is a separated and irreplaceable being. The only true death supposes separation and, through the discourse which separates, the consciousness of being separated.

'Impotent beauty hates the understanding'

Up to this point, Hegel's text presents a *simple* and *common* truth, but one enunciated in a philosophical manner which is, properly speaking, sibylline. In the passage from the Preface cited above, Hegel, on the contrary affirms and describes a *personal* moment of violence – Hegel, in other words the Sage, to whom an absolute knowledge has conferred definitive satisfaction. This is not an unbridled violence. What Hegel unleashes here is not the violence of nature; it is the energy, or the violence, of the understanding – the Negativity of the understanding – opposing itself to the pure beauty of the dream, which cannot act, which is impotent.

Indeed, the beauty of the dream is on that side of the world where nothing is yet separated from what surrounds it, where each element, in contrast to the abstract objects of the understanding, is given concretely, in space and time. But beauty cannot *act*. It can only be and preserve itself. Through action it would no longer exist, since action would first destroy what beauty is: beauty, which seeks nothing, which is, which refuses to move itself but which is disturbed by the force of the understanding. Moreover, beauty does not have the power to respond to the request of the understanding, which asks it to uphold and preserve the work of *human* death. Beauty is incapable of it, in the sense that to uphold that work, it would be engaged in action. Beauty is sovereign: it is an end, or it is not: that is why it is not susceptible to acting, why it is, even in principle, powerless and why it cannot yield to the active

negation of the understanding, which changes the world and itself becomes other than it is.⁶

This beauty without consciousness of itself *cannot therefore* really – but not for the same reason as life, which ‘recoils in horror from death and wants to save itself from annihilation’ – bear death and preserve itself in it. This impotent beauty at least suffers from feeling the break-up of the profoundly indissoluble totality of what is (of the concrete real). Beauty would like to remain the sign of an accord of the real with itself. It cannot become conscious Negativity, awakened in dismemberment, and the lucid gaze, absorbed in the Negative. This latter attitude presupposes the violent and laborious struggle of man against nature and is its end. That is the historic struggle where man constitutes himself as ‘subject’ or as ‘abstract I’ of the ‘understanding’, as a separated and named being.

‘That is to say’, Kojève clarifies,

that thought and the discourse which reveals the real are born of the negative action which actualizes Nothingness by annihilating Being: the given being of man (in the struggle) and the given being of nature (through work – which results, moreover, from the real contact with death in the struggle). That is to say, therefore, that the human being himself is none other than that action: he is death which lives a human life.

(K, 548; TEL, 550)

I want to insist on the continual connection between an abyssal aspect and a tough, down-to-earth aspect in this philosophy, the only one having the ambition to be complete. The divergent possibilities of opposed human figures confront each other and assemble in it: the figure of the dying man and of the proud one, who turns from death, the figure of the master and that of the man pinned to his work, the figure of the revolutionary and that of the sceptic, whose egotistical interest limits desire. This philosophy is not only a philosophy of death. It is also one of class struggle and work.

But within the limits of this study I do not intend to envisage this other side. I would like to compare that Hegelian doctrine of death with what we know about ‘sacrifice’.

II Sacrifice

Sacrifice, on the one hand, and on the other, the gaze of Hegel absorbed in death and sacrifice

I shall not speak of the interpretation of sacrifice which Hegel gives in the chapter of the *Phenomenology* devoted to Religion.⁷ It no doubt makes sense in the development of the chapter, but it strays from the

essential and, from the point of view of the theory of sacrifice, it is, in my opinion, of less interest than the implicit representation which is given in the text of the Preface and which I shall continue to analyse.

Concerning sacrifice, I can essentially say that, on the level of Hegel's philosophy, man has, in a sense, revealed and founded human truth by sacrificing; in sacrifice he destroyed the animal⁸ in himself, allowing himself and the animal to survive only as that non-corporeal truth which Hegel describes and which makes of man – in Heidegger's words – a being unto death (*Sein zum Tode*), or – in the words of Kojève himself – 'death which lives a human life'.

Actually, the problem of Hegel is given in the action of sacrifice. In sacrifice, death, on the one hand, essentially strikes the corporeal being; and on the other hand, it is precisely in sacrifice that 'death lives a *human* life'. It should even be said that sacrifice is the precise response to Hegel's requirement, the original formulation of which I repeat:

Spirit attains its truth only by finding itself in absolute dismemberment. It does not attain that (prodigious) power by being the Positive that turns away from the Negative . . . no, Spirit is that power only in the degree to which it contemplates the Negative face to face [and] dwells with it.

If one takes into account the fact that the institution of sacrifice is practically universal, it is clear that Negativity, incarnated in man's death, not only is the arbitrary construction of Hegel, but also that it has played a role in the spirit of the simplest men, without any common grounds comparable to those which are regulated once and for all by the ceremonies of a Church – but none the less in a univocal manner. It is striking to see that across the world a communal *Negativity* has maintained a strict parallelism in the development of rather stable institutions, which have the same form and the same effects.

Whether he lives or dies, man cannot immediately know death

I shall speak later of the profound differences between the man of sacrifice, acting in ignorance (unconscious) of the full scope of what he is doing, and the Sage (Hegel) surrendering to the implications of a knowledge which, in his own eyes, is absolute.

Despite these differences, the question of manifesting the Negative still remains (and still under a concrete form, i.e. at the heart of the totality, whose constitutive elements are inseparable). The privileged manifestation of Negativity is death, but death, in fact, reveals nothing. In theory, it is his natural, animal being whose death reveals man to himself, but the revelation never takes place. For when the animal being supporting him dies, the human being himself ceases to be. In order for man to

reveal himself ultimately to himself, he would have to die, but he would have to do it while living – watching himself ceasing to be. In other words, death itself would have to become (self-) consciousness at the very moment that it annihilates the conscious being. In a sense, this is what takes place (what at least is on the point of taking place, or which takes place in a fugitive, ungraspable manner) by means of a subterfuge. In the sacrifice, the sacrificer identifies himself with the animal that is struck down dead. And so he dies in seeing himself die, and even, in a certain way, by his own will, one in spirit with the sacrificial weapon. But it is a comedy!

At least it would be a comedy if some other method existed which could reveal to the living the invasion of death: that finishing off of the finite being, which *his* Negativity – which kills him, *ends* him and definitively suppresses him – accomplishes alone and which it alone can accomplish. For Hegel, *satisfaction* can only take place, desire can be appeased only in the consciousness of death. If it were based on the exclusion of death, satisfaction would contradict that which death designates, if the satisfied being who is not conscious, not utterly conscious, of what in a constitutive manner he is, i.e. mortal, were eventually to be driven from satisfaction by death. That is why the consciousness that he has *of himself* must reflect (must mirror) the movement of Negativity which creates him, which makes a man of him for the very reason that it will one day kill him.

He will be killed by his own Negativity, but for him, thereafter, there will be nothing left; his is a creative death, but if the consciousness of death – of the marvellous magic of death – does not touch him before he dies, during his life it will seem that death is not destined to reach him, and so the death awaiting him will not give him a *human* character. Thus, at all costs, man must live at the moment that he really dies, or he must live with the impression of really dying.

Knowledge of death cannot do without a subterfuge: spectacle

This difficulty proclaims the necessity of *spectacle*, or of *representation* in general, without the practice of which it would be possible for us to remain alien and ignorant in respect to death, just as beasts apparently are. Indeed, nothing is less animal than fiction, which is more or less separated from the real, from death.

Man does not live by bread alone, but also by the comedies with which he willingly deceives himself. In man it is the animal, it is the natural being, which eats. But man takes part in rites and performances. Or else he can read: to the extent that it is sovereign – authentic – literature prolongs in him the haunting magic of performances, tragic or comic.

In tragedy,⁹ at least, it is a question of our identifying with some character who dies, and of believing that we die, although we are alive.

Furthermore, pure and simple imagination suffices, but it has the same meaning as the classic subterfuges, performances or books, to which the masses have recourse.

Agreement and disagreement between naive behaviours and Hegel's lucid reaction

By associating it with sacrifice and, thereby, with the primary theme of *representation* (in art, in festivals, in performances), I have sought to demonstrate that Hegel's reaction is fundamental human behaviour. It is not a fantasy or a strange attitude; it is *par excellence* the expression endlessly repeated by tradition. It is not Hegel alone, it is all of humanity which everywhere always sought, obliquely, to seize what death both gave and took away from humanity.

Between Hegel and the man of sacrifice there nevertheless remains a profound difference. Hegel was *conscious* of his representation of the Negative: he situated it, lucidly, in a definite point of the 'coherent discourse' which revealed him to himself. That totality included the discourse which reveals it. The man of sacrifice, who lacked a discursive consciousness of what he did, had only a 'sensual' awareness, i.e. an obscure one, reduced to an unintelligible emotion. It is true that Hegel himself, beyond discourse, and in spite of himself (in an 'absolute dismemberment') received the shock of death even more violently. More violently, above all, for the primary reason that the broad movement of discourse extended its reach beyond limits, i.e. within the framework of the totality of the real. Beyond the slightest doubt, for Hegel, the fact that he was still alive was simply an aggravation. The man of sacrifice, on the other hand, maintains his life essentially. He maintains it not only in the sense that life is necessary for the representation of death, but [also in the sense that] he seeks to *enrich* it. But from an external perspective, the palpable and *intentional* excitement of sacrifice was of greater interest than the *involuntary* sensitivity of Hegel. The excitement of which I speak is well known, is definable; it is *sacred* horror: the richest and the most agonizing experience, which does not limit itself to dismemberment but which, on the contrary, opens itself, like a theatre curtain, on to a realm beyond this world, where the rising light of day transfigures all things and destroys their limited meaning.

Indeed, if Hegel's attitude opposes learned consciousness and the limitless organization of a discursive thinking to the naivety of sacrifice, still that consciousness and that organization remain unclear on one point; one cannot say that Hegel was unaware of the 'moment' of sacrifice; this 'moment' is included, implicated in the whole movement of the *Phenomenology* – where it is the Negativity of death, in so far as it is assumed, which makes a man of the human animal. But because he did not see that sacrifice in itself bore witness to the *entire* movement of

death,¹⁰ the final experience – the one peculiar to the Sage – described in the Preface to the *Phenomenology* was at first *initial* and *universal* – he did not know to what extent he was right – with what precision he described the intimate movement of Negativity; he did not clearly separate death from the feeling of sadness to which naive experience opposes a sort of shunting yard of the emotions.

Pleasure and the sadness of death

It was precisely the univocal character of death for Hegel that inspired the following commentary from Kojève, which applies, again, to the passage from the Preface (K, 549; TEL, 551). ‘Certainly, the idea of death does not heighten the *well-being* of Man; it does not make him *happy* nor does it give him any pleasure.’ Kojève wondered in what way satisfaction results from a familiarity with the Negative, from a *tête-à-tête* with death. He believed it his duty, out of decency, to reject vulgar satisfaction. The fact that Hegel himself said, in this respect, that Spirit ‘only attains its truth by finding itself in absolute dismemberment’ goes together, in principle, with Kojève’s Negation. Consequently, it would even be superfluous to insist . . . Kojève simply states that the idea of death ‘is alone capable of satisfying man’s pride’ . . . Indeed, the desire to be ‘recognized’, which Hegel places at the origin of historical struggles, could be expressed in an intrepid attitude, of the sort that shows a character to its best advantage. ‘It is only’, says Kojève, ‘in being or in becoming aware of one’s mortality or finitude, in existing and in feeling one’s existence in a universe without a beyond or without a God, that man can affirm his liberty, his historicity and his individuality – “unique in all the world” – and have them be recognized’ (ibid.). But if Kojève sets aside vulgar satisfaction – happiness – he now also sets aside Hegel’s ‘absolute dismemberment’: indeed, such dismemberment is not easily reconciled with the desire for recognition.

Satisfaction and dismemberment coincide, however, in one point, but here they harmonize with *pleasure*. This coincidence takes place in ‘sacrifice’; it is generally understood as the *naive form of life*, as every existence in present time, which manifests what man is: the novelty which he signifies in the world after he has become *man*, on the condition that he has satisfied his ‘*animal*’ needs.

At any rate, *pleasure*, or at least sensual pleasure, is such that in respect to it Kojève’s affirmation would be difficult to uphold: the idea of death helps, in a certain manner and in certain cases, to multiply the pleasures of the senses. I go so far as to believe that, under the form of defilement, the world (or rather the general imagery) of death is at the base of erotism. The feeling of sin is connected in lucid consciousness to the idea of death, and *in the same manner* the feeling of sin is connected with pleasure.¹¹ There is in fact no *human* pleasure without some

irregularity in its circumstances, without the breaking of an interdiction – the simplest, and the most powerful, of which is currently that of nudity.

Moreover, possession was associated in its time with the image of sacrifice; it was a sacrifice in which woman was the victim. . . . That association from ancient poetry is very meaningful; it refers back to a precise state of sensibility in which the sacrificial element, the feeling of sacred horror itself, joined, in a weakened state, to a tempered pleasure; in which, too, the taste for sacrifice and the emotion which it related seemed in no way contrary to the ultimate uses of pleasure.

It must be said too that sacrifice, like tragedy, was an element of a celebration; it bespoke a blind, pernicious joy and all the danger of that joy, and yet this is precisely the principle of *human joy*; it wears out and threatens with death all who get caught up in its movement.

Gay anguish, anguished gaiety

To the association of death and pleasure, which is not a given, at least is not an immediate given in consciousness, is obviously opposed the sadness of death, always in the background of consciousness. In principle, *consciously*, humanity 'recoils in horror before death'. In principle, the destructive effects of Negativity have nature as their object. But for Man's Negativity to drive him into a confrontation with danger, for him to make of himself, or at least of the animal, of the natural being that he is, the object of his destructive negation, the banal prerequisite is his unconsciousness of the cause and the effects of his actions. Now, it was essential for Hegel to *gain consciousness* of Negativity as such, to capture its horror – here the horror of death – by upholding and by looking the work of death right in the face.

Hegel, in this way, is less opposed to those who 'recoil' than to those who say: 'it is nothing'. He seems to distance himself most from those who react with gaiety.

I want to emphasize, as clearly as possible, after their similarity, the opposition between the naive attitude and that of the – *absolute* – Wisdom of Hegel. I am not sure, in fact, that of the two attitudes the more naive is the less *absolute*.

I shall cite a paradoxical example of a gay reaction in the face of the work of death.

The Irish and Welsh custom of the 'wake' is little known but was still practised at the end of the last century. It is the subject of Joyce's last work,¹² *Finnegans Wake* – the deathwatch of Finnegan (however, the reading of this famous novel is difficult at best). In Wales, the coffin was placed *open*, standing at the place of honour of the house. The dead man would be dressed in his finest suit and top hat. His family would invite all of his friends, who honoured the departed all the more the longer they danced and the deeper they drank to his health. It is the

death of an *other*, but in such instances, the death of the other is always the image of one's own death. Only under one condition could anyone so rejoice; with the presumed agreement of the dead man – who is an other – the dead man that the drinker in his turn will become shall have no other meaning than his predecessor.

This paradoxical reaction could be considered a response to the desire to deny *the existence of death*. A logical desire? Not in the least, I think. In Mexico today, death is commonly envisaged on the same level as the amusements that can be found at festivals: skeleton puppets, skeleton sweets, skeleton merry-go-rounds – but this custom is associated with an intense cult of the dead, a visible obsession with death.¹³

If I envisage death gaily, it is not that I too say, in turning away from what is frightening: 'it is nothing' or 'it is false'. On the contrary, gaiety, connected with the work of death, causes me anguish, is accentuated by my anguish, and in return exacerbates that anguish: ultimately, gay, anguish, anguished gaiety cause me, in a feverish chill,¹⁴ 'absolute dismemberment', where it is my joy that finally tears me apart, but where dejection would follow joy were I not torn all the way to the end, immeasurably.

There is one precise opposition that I would like to bring out fully: on the one hand Hegel's attitude is less whole than that of naive humanity, but this is meaningless unless, reciprocally, one sees that the naive attitude is powerless to maintain itself without subterfuge.

Discourse gives useful ends to sacrifice 'afterwards.'

I have linked the meaning of sacrifice to man's behaviour once his animal needs have been satisfied: man differs from the natural being which he also is; the sacrificial gesture is what he humanly is, and the spectacle of sacrifice then makes his humanity manifest. Freed from animal need, man is sovereign: he does what he pleases – his pleasure. Under these conditions he is finally able to make a rigorously autonomous gesture. So long as he needed to satisfy animal needs, he had to act with an end in view (he had to secure food, protect himself from the cold). This supposes a servitude, a series of acts subordinated to a final result: the natural, animal satisfaction without which man properly speaking, sovereign man, could not subsist. But man's intelligence, his *discursive thought*, developed as functions of servile labour. Only sacred, poetic words, limited to the level of impotent beauty, have retained the power to manifest full sovereignty. Sacrifice, consequently, is a *sovereign, autonomous* manner of being only to the extent that it is uninformed by *meaningful* discourse. To the extent that discourse informs it, what is *sovereign* is given in terms of *servitude*. Indeed by definition what is *sovereign* does not *serve*. But simple discourse must respond to the question that discursive thought asks concerning the meaning that each thing

must have on the level of utility. In principle, each thing is there to *serve* some purpose or other. Thus the simple manifestation of man's link to annihilation, the pure revelation of man to himself (at the moment when death transfixes his attention) passes from sovereignty to the primacy of servile ends. Myth, associated with ritual, had at first the impotent beauty of poetry, but discourse concerning sacrifice slipped into vulgar, self-serving interpretation. Starting with effects naively imagined on the level of poetry, such as the appeasing of a god or the purity of beings, the end of meaningful discourse became the abundance of rain or the city's well-being. The substantial work of Frazer, who recalls those forms of sovereignty that were the most *impotent* and, apparently, the least propitious for happiness, generally tends to reduce the meaning of the ritual act to the same purposes as labour in the fields, and to make of sacrifice an agrarian rite. Today that thesis of *The Golden Bough* is discredited, but it seemed reasonable in so far as the same people who sacrificed inscribed sovereign sacrifice within the frame of a language of ploughmen. It is true that in a very arbitrary manner, which never merited the credence of rigorous reason, these people attempted, and must have laboured to submit sacrifice to the laws of action, laws to which they themselves were submitted, or laboured to submit themselves.

Impotence of the sage to attain sovereignty on the basis of discourse

Thus, the sovereignty of sacrifice is not absolute either. It is not absolute to the extent that the institution maintains within the world of efficacious activity a form whose meaning is, on the contrary, sovereign. A slippage cannot fail to occur, to the benefit of servitude.

If the attitude of the Sage (Hegel) is not, for its part, sovereign, at least things function in the opposite direction; Hegel did not distance himself, and if he was unable to find authentic sovereignty, he came as near to it as he could. What separated him from it would even be imperceptible were we not able to glimpse a richer image through these alterations of meaning, which touch on sacrifice and which have reduced it from an *end* to a simple *means*. The key to a lesser rigorousness on the part of the Sage is the fact, not that discourse engages his sovereignty within a frame that cannot suit him and which atrophies it, but precisely the opposite: sovereignty in Hegel's attitude proceeds from a movement which *discourse* reveals and which, in the Sage's spirit, is never separated from its revelation. It can never, therefore, be fully *sovereign*; the Sage, in fact, cannot fail to subordinate it to the goal of a Wisdom which supposes the completion of discourse. Wisdom alone *will be* full autonomy, the sovereignty of being. . . . At least it *would be* if we could find sovereignty by searching for it: and, in fact, if I search for it, I am undertaking the project of being-sovereignly: but the *project* of being-sovereignly presupposes a servile being! What none the less assures the

sovereignty of the moment described is the 'absolute dismemberment' of which Hegel speaks, the rupture, for a time, of discourse. But that rupture itself is not sovereign. In a sense it is an accident in the ascent. Although the two sovereignties, the naive and the sage ones, are both sovereignties of death, beyond the difference between a decline at birth (between a gradual alteration and an imperfect manifestation), they differ on yet another precise point: on Hegel's part, it is precisely a question of an accident. It is not a stroke of fate, a piece of bad luck, which would be for ever deprived of sense. Dismemberment is, on the contrary, full of meaning. (*'Spirit only attains its truth'*, writes Hegel (my italics), 'by finding itself in absolute dismemberment'). But this meaning is unfortunate. It is what limited and impoverished the revelation which the Sage drew from lingering in the regions where death reigns. He welcomed sovereignty as a weight, which he let go . . .

Do I intend to minimize Hegel's attitude? But the contrary is true! I want to show the incomparable scope of his approach. To that end I cannot veil the very minimal (and even inevitable) part of failure.

To my mind, it is rather the exceptional certainty of that approach which is brought out in my associations. If he failed, one cannot say that it was the result of an error. The meaning of the failure itself differs from that of the failure which caused it: the error alone is perhaps fortuitous. In general, it is as an authentic movement, weighty with sense, that one must speak of the 'failure' of Hegel.

Indeed, man is always in pursuit of an authentic sovereignty. That sovereignty, apparently, was, in a certain sense, originally his, but doubtless that could not then have been in a *conscious* manner, and so in a sense it was not his; it escaped him. We shall see that in a number of ways he continued to pursue what forever eluded him. The essential thing is that one cannot attain it consciously and seek it, because seeking distances it. And yet I can believe that nothing is given us that is not given in that equivocal manner.

Notes

1. Excerpt from a study on the – fundamentally Hegelian – thought of Alexander Kojève. This thought seeks, so far as possible, to be Hegel's thought, such as a contemporary spirit, knowing what Hegel did not know (knowing, for example, the events that have occurred since 1917 and, as well, the philosophy of Heidegger), could grasp it and develop it. Alexander Kojève's originality and courage, it must be said, is to have perceived the impossibility of going any further, the necessity, consequently, of renouncing the creation of an original philosophy and, thereby, the interminable starting-over which is the avowal of the vanity of thought. This essay was first published in *Deucalion* 5 (1955).

2. G. W. F. Hegel, *Jenenser Philosophie des Geistes in Sämtliche Werke*, ed.

Johannes Hoffmeister (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1931), vol 20, 180–1. Cited by Kojève in *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), 573 (TEL edition (Paris: Gallimard, 1980), 575. Henceforth cited in the text as K; TEL).

3. In this paragraph, and the following, I repeat in a different form what has been said by Alexander Kojève. But not only in a different form; essentially I have to develop the second part of that sentence, which is, at first glance, difficult to comprehend in its concrete aspect: 'The being or the annihilation of the "Subject" is the temporalizing annihilation of Being, which must be *before* the annihilated being: the being of the "Subject" necessarily has, therefore, a beginning. And being the (temporal) annihilation of the nothingness in Being, being nothingness which nihilates (in so far as Time), the "Subject" is essentially negation of itself: therefore it has an end.' In particular, I have followed for this (as I have already done in the preceding paragraph) the part of *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* which concerns Parts 2 and 3 of the present study, i.e. Appendix II, 'The idea of death in the philosophy of Hegel', Kojève, 527–73; (TEL, 529–75). [A translation of this appendix is reprinted above, pp. 311–58. R.S.]

4. Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 9–10. In his notes, Bataille attributes the French versions he uses of Hegel to Jean Hyppolite's translation of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* and often also cites the pages from *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel* where Alexandre Kojève quotes the same passages. However, Kojève's version differs from that of Hyppolite, and Bataille's from both. It is the latter that I have translated. Page references will hereafter be given to the English translation by A. V. Miller, which is often at significant variance with the quotations as I have rendered them. [Translator's note.]

5. Cf. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller, 19. Cited by Kojève, 538–9 (TEL, 540–1) Kojève, Hyppolite and Bataille all translate the German 'Zerrissenheit' by 'déchirement', which I in turn have given as 'dismemberment', the same word which appears in Miller's translation of Hegel. It is important to note that the word 'déchirement' has the meanings of 'shredding' and 'tearing' and, unlike 'dismemberment', does not imply a disarticulation into predetermined units. In *L'Expérience intérieure*, for example, Bataille speaks of himself as left in 'lambeaux' (shreds, as of cloth or paper) which his 'inability to respond *achevait de . . . déchirer*' (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), 19). [Translator's note.]

6. Here my interpretation differs slightly from Kojève's (146 (TEL, 148)). Kojève simply states that 'impotent beauty is incapable of bending to the requirements of the understanding. The aesthete, the romantic, the mystic, flee the idea of death and speak of Nothingness itself as something which *is*.' In particular, he admirably describes the mystic in this way. But the same ambiguity is found in philosophers (in Hegel, in Heidegger), at least ultimately. In truth, Kojève seems to me wrong not to have envisaged, beyond classical mysticism, a 'conscious mysticism', conscious of making a Being from Nothingness, and, in addition, defining that impasse as a Negativity which would no longer have a field of action (at the end of history). The atheistic mystic, *self-conscious*, conscious of having to die and to disappear, would live, as Hegel *obviously said concerning himself*, 'in absolute dismemberment'; but, for him, it is only the matter of a certain period: unlike Hegel, he would never come out of it, 'contemplating the Negative right in the face', but never being able to transpose it into Being, refusing to do it and maintaining himself in ambiguity.

7. *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, chapter 8: Religion, B: Religion in the form of Art, (a) The abstract work of art (434–5). In these two pages, Hegel dwells on the disappearance of *objective essence*, but without developing its consequences. On the second page Hegel limits himself to considerations proper to 'aesthetic religion' (the religion of the Greeks).

8. Still, although animal sacrifice seems to pre-date human sacrifice, there is nothing to prove that the choice of an animal signifies the unconscious desire to oppose the animal as such; man is only opposed to corporeal being, the being that is given. He is, furthermore, just as opposed to the plant.

9. I discuss comedy further on.

10. Perhaps for lack of a Catholic religious experience. I imagine Catholicism closer to pagan experience, I mean to a universal religious experience from which the Reformation distanced itself. Perhaps a profound Catholic piety could alone have introduced the inward sense without which the phenomenology of sacrifice would be impossible. Modern knowledge, much more extensive than that of Hegel's time, has assuredly contributed to the solution of that fundamental enigma (why, without any plausible reason, *has humanity in general* 'sacrificed?'), but I seriously believe that a correct phenomenological description could only be based on at least a Catholic *period*.

But at any rate, Hegel, hostile to *being* which does nothing – to what simply *is*, and is not *action* – was more interested in military death; it is through such death that he perceived the theme of sacrifice (but he himself uses the word in a moral sense): 'The state-of-the-soldier', he states in his *Lectures* of 1805–6, 'and war are the objectively real sacrifice of the personal-I, the danger of death for the particular – that contemplation of his abstract immediate Negativity' (in Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 20, 261–2. Cited by Kojève in *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 558 [TEL, 560]). None the less, religious sacrifice has, even from Hegel's point of view, an essential signification.

11. This is at least possible and, if it is a matter of the most common interdictions, banal.

12. On the subject of this obscure book, *vide* E. Jolas, 'Elucidation du monomythe de James Joyce' in *Critique* (July 1948): 579–95.

13. This came out in the documentary which Eisenstein drew from his work for a long film: *¡Viva Mexico!* The crux of this film dealt with the bizarre practices which I have discussed.

14. Reading *chaud et froid* for *chaud-froid*, which means a dish prepared hot but served cold.

The human situation in the Hegelian phenomenology (1947)

Jean Hyppolite

Action and the rationality of the act

Haym, one of the principal commentators on Hegel's *Phenomenology*, remarks that: 'It is a history distorted by transcendental psychology and a transcendental psychology distorted by history.' An uninformed reader might well be puzzled by the nature of its development. He is likely to wonder why self-consciousness emerges against the background of universal life and what particular relation constitutes the foundation of life and self-consciousness. The conjuncture between life and self-consciousness invites questions about the role of the struggle for life and death in which each consciousness seeks the death of the other and risks his own life in the course of forcing others into the same conflict. Have we here an event of human history that must be given a historical location, or a myth for the interpretation of a quasi-permanent relation between self-conscious individuals? Readers interested in Hegel's frequently dramatic presentation, affecting a certain naivety, occasionally ask what becomes of the master, once the slave becomes master of his master, or what becomes of the slave, once he is in turn master. Hegel's account breaks off at this point and passes on without any clear transition to the Stoic who preserves his liberty 'on the throne as when in chains'. The images of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius are evoked summarily, and the reader over-fond of novels is left languishing for the final outcome of the adventure of master and slave.

The problem of the logical connections between the transitions and the symphonic development of themes in the *Phenomenology* immediately confronts anyone who attempts to grasp the significance of this work, unique in the whole of philosophical literature. Is it a philosophical novel, and, if so, is it still philosophy, or is it a serious philosophical work in which each element is logically tied to the other? Lucien Herr has

remarked: 'In Hegel the transitions are always guided by sentiment.' However, we can hardly accept this judgment, if we are to understand the allegation of sentiment in its usual sense. Lucien Herr was right to insist upon the creative power of the Hegelian dialectic at a time when too many Hegelians interpreted Hegelian philosophy simply as a panlogic. But this is no longer the case, and we must now attempt to understand what were in fact Hegel's intentions. We shall limit our endeavour to a study of the chapter on 'Self Consciousness' – the most profound and significant chapter of the entire *Phenomenology of Mind* – in the hope that we may show that it has nothing to do with either a history or a transcendental psychology, and still less with an analysis of essence. Briefly, Hegel wanted to analyse the very *foundations* of historical action. He inquired into the general conditions of *human existence* that constitute the possibility of the human act as such. As we now understand it, man is always in a specific historical situation that nevertheless presupposes certain general conditions which it is important to distinguish, since they are more or less constant for every human situation as such. The question arises as to the nature of the method of abstracting these conditions. We remarked above that the expression 'analysis of essence' will not serve to describe what we have in mind. It would leave the impression that there exists a *human nature* or an essence of man, such as Spinoza and even Hume supposed. But Hegel has no intention of discovering such an essence in which he seems to have no belief and whose conception he criticizes in his early works. For Hegel man is *spirit*, that is to say, history and collective development; the truth to which he may aspire appears in and through that history. The question which Hegel set himself, we believe, is the problem of how to *ground* human history and a possible truth, or *reason*, within the development of history so conceived. To grasp the originality of Hegel's starting point it may suffice to compare him with either his predecessors or successors. Kant, for example, raised a question which appears similar to that of Hegel. He asked what were the conditions of human knowledge in so far as it is empirical knowledge. But he confined himself to the problem of knowledge and did not consider, at least in his main work, the question of the historical condition of man seeking knowledge. This is perhaps why he failed to solve his problem. Because reason itself has historical preconditions, the *human act* possibly precedes, *de jure* and *de facto*, the *notion of reason*. It is no accident that, in the development of the *Phenomenology*, *reason* appears in a new chapter, following the one which deals with the *recognition* which one self-consciousness demands from another.

We turn now to one of Hegel's great successors, namely, Marx. Quite rightly, Marx comments that in the *Phenomenology* Hegel occasionally describes 'the true features of the human condition'. But Marx himself did not understand the necessity of penetrating to the ground of the

historical event and of the human act itself. He was so steeped in Hegel – in his doctoral dissertation he had interpreted the relations between the atoms of Democritus and Epicurus in terms of the Hegelian dialectic of self-consciousness – that he neglected to deal with the problem at its very source. The result is that he seems to start from certain *facts* which, however fruitful they may be, are none the less merely facts to which others might be opposed. He takes up the class struggle in history as an essential phenomenon; of course, he relates it to the notion of labour, and labour itself to a primary relation between man and nature, but he does not offer any explicit treatment of this basis of his dialectic. Contrary to Kant, Marx offers facts where there was reason. From this there results an ambiguity in his thought which can only be clarified by resorting to the Hegelian *Phenomenology* from which he clearly drew inspiration. Since history pervades the entire realm of thought and human action, one must penetrate to the root of history, and ask, as Hegel did in the *Phenomenology*, what are the conditions of self-consciousness or of the very existence of man. Of course, as is in fact clearly indicated by the term 'self-consciousness', which only Hegel uses, we are not here concerned with an anthropological analysis in the strict sense. It is not a question of man considered as a biological species, but of the emergence in the very heart of life of a being who becomes conscious of this life as the condition of his existence and through this rise of consciousness creates almost a new dimension of being, generating a history in which conscious being makes and reveals a rational truth.

The human situation in relation to nature

'The desert', says Balzac, 'is God without man'; Hegel took a similar view of pure nature, while it remains an *in-itself* not having found in man that whereby it may be given a *meaning*. 'Nature is a hidden spirit.' Universal life, which is the true object, the condition of self-consciousness, does not exist as such in the indefinite multiplicity of living individuals; 'it is the *whole* which develops itself, resolves its own development, and in this movement simply preserves itself', yet does not exist as such, as a possible totality, except for (human) self-consciousness which reflects on life. 'It is the simple genus, which in the movement of life itself does not exist in this simplicity for itself; but in this result points life towards what is other than itself, namely, towards Consciousness for which life exists as this unity or as genus.'¹

These remarks drawn from Hegel summarize the relations between self-consciousness and life. They show how self-consciousness emerges as the necessary rise of the consciousness of universal life, of 'the soul of the world, the universal life-blood, which courses everywhere, and whose

flow is neither disturbed nor checked by any obstructing distinction'.² This Absolute of the Romantics, whose inhumanity reminds one of the God of Spinoza, is also the 'universal ineradicable substance, the fluent self-identical essential reality'³ upon which are exerted man's desire and labour, 'labour and the patience of the negation', in order to dominate it. Admittedly, this principle of negation is already present in the living forms which succeed each other in cosmic time, or are juxtaposed in space. But this is simply a particular manifestation, a finite modality which within the process of life suppresses itself and dies in giving birth to a new living form. This death is not yet internalized and surpassed; it remains external to the particular creature which it nevertheless animates. This 'dying and becoming' is without an echo in that silent nature which waits for its expression in the 'logos of man'. But self-consciousness must emerge against the background of this universal life, because the latter is already in itself what self-consciousness must become for itself; and this reduplication of the 'self same' is here a dialectical necessity which all the preceding chapters of *The Phenomenology of Mind* have prepared. The object which at first confronts consciousness is now determined as being universal life; what self-consciousness finds confronting it as a totality is the life that is its *own* life which it discovers as something at once identical with itself and other than itself. Consciousness observes itself outside of itself in this living universe to which it belongs because it is also 'a particular living form', a determinate organic body. In so far as it is self-consciousness of life it is the contradiction of being the universal genus, 'which does *not exist* as such in animal life', and a particular, determinate existent. This contradiction lies at the heart of the unhappy consciousness, but its resolution constitutes the reason and truth of human history.

In his early works Hegel had conceived this dualism necessary to consciousness in the form of love; but love is only a 'return to the original and sombre innocence'. He had completely ignored any philosophy of nature. However, from the Jena period he begins to follow his former student friend, Schelling, and reflects upon organic life and the general dialectic of living creatures. He then comes to understand how self-consciousness of organic life can raise itself above life and, while reflecting it, yet oppose itself to life. This reflection, which is simultaneously an act of negation, or a creative awakening of consciousness that 'raises the omnipotence of Non-Being to the level of Being', generates a new dimension of being. Self-consciousness of life becomes something other than life in the course of displaying its truth, by becoming capable of being the *truth* of life. The difficulty is in understanding how self-consciousness of life is able, precisely through this act of reflection, to negate the life of which it is only a reflection, or how it can generate a new form of being while not confining itself to being solely the contemplation of what

already exists. To repeat within itself the cosmic process of life which makes it possible, and to create through this repetition a history distinct from this life-history – because spirit is higher than nature since it is the reflection of it – such is the enigma of the emergence of consciousness as an authentic creation. But this enigma is nothing else than the existence of man, or rather of men. For in repeating the cosmic movement of life Hegel brings to light the conditions of self-consciousness and, within the latter, the mutual relations between one self-consciousness and another in the process of *recognition*. We must follow this essential development from the moment where self-consciousness defines itself as *desire* (of life) through to the moment where it posits itself as the need for a *recognition* that, in creating the element of universality, and consequently of reason, makes possible history, an ‘ego that is “we”, a plurality of egos, and “we” that is a single ego’.

Desire: Spinozism and Hegelianism

In giving an account of the philosophy of life from which Hegel started it may be useful to employ Spinoza’s vocabulary and to follow Hegel in comparing his philosophy of life with that of Spinoza. Universal life is a substance that is considered the infinite source of all particular living beings, each of which is a finite mode, a singular individuality, which emerges from this universal life. Each one expresses substance in a vital process of dying and coming into being. Life works itself out in some way through each and without any of them; it appears as something beyond, an external accident that is alien to their characteristic ‘positive particular essence’. For its own part, individuality can only persevere in its mode of being; it does not contain within itself the conflict essential to life. Every essence is positive. Proposition V in Book III of the *Ethics* excludes the possibility of conflict within the same individuality. ‘In so far as one thing is able to destroy another are they of contrary natures, that is to say, they cannot exist in the same subject.’ Spinoza, according to Hegel, failed to understand the nature of individuality *in itself* which enables it to express authentically the infinity of substance; he did not conceive negation as something determined by the operation of negativity. His (inhuman) philosophy may very well account for the life of nature (*Deus sive natura*) which never surpasses itself. But it does not hold for human existence, which, in so far as it is consciousness of life, reveals the *for-itself* of this *in-itself*.

We may consider what the individual perceives in the *in-itself* of this nature. Each living agent is alive only through coming into being; at a particular moment, when he arrives on the world scene, he confronts universal life, and in this process of opposition to what is other (Spinoza

here makes an unwarranted transition from the standpoint of essence to the opposition of exteriority), he determines himself completely and fulfils himself in the course of negating himself as a particular existent. This negation of the negation is the movement of the *genus*. Thus it appears as death and reproduction in such a way that we see the living succeed each other like waves 'in a silent flood'. Each particular only realizes the universal in so far as it dies and its death is the correlative of the birth of another particular being which is in turn quite distinct from that which engendered it. But the distinctiveness or separation which characterizes positive being, or nature diffused through space and time, is such that the process of universal life never succeeds in coming to itself but falls short just when it might discover itself. Not even for itself is it 'that pure restlessness of the concept', as is the flow of time for self-consciousness. It can only be this for man, who becomes conscious of death in order to surpass it. Thus the slave who has known the fear of death, the absolute master, raises himself above the master, who has only known, as master, what it is to risk his physical life. But immediate risk amounts to less than the effort of the slave who, having experienced the fear of death, knows how to free himself from it within his life.

Even at the level of living nature, individuality is always haunted by a latent conflict; it needs to complement itself in another individuality. 'The idea of organic individuality is in itself a genus, universality . . . Individuality by itself is infinite, it is thus other than itself, appears outside itself in "its other"'.⁴ It exists in the separation of sexes in which each contains the idea of the whole but 'in relating to itself as to an other, recognizes its being-other as itself and consequently suppresses this opposition'. But the suppression of this diremption at the level of animal life does not result in the explicit emergence of the *Idea* as such, but only in another individuality which in turn repeats this process. Nevertheless, in itself 'the individual is the *Idea*, and it exists only as *Idea*. Therefore there exists within the individual the contradiction between being the *Idea* and being other than the *Idea*.' This is why the individual is the 'absolute impulse', rather than merely the tendency of being to remain in a given state, and it is this in virtue of an internal contradiction. The Spinozan philosophy of nature is displaced by a dialectical philosophy in which the dialectic is only for itself in the case of man, for 'organic nature has no history'.⁵

It was seen that in nature the cycle of the *Idea* is only closed through a repetition of the same process. The child is indeed the quest for unity, but he in turn is a particular existent 'who deprives those who are opposed of their essence from becoming *Idea*'. The growth of children is the death of parents. 'The savages in North America kill their parents and we do the same.' However, even at the animal level there is a moment which foreshadows consciousness, namely, *in sickness*. In sickness the organism

is divided against itself internally. Life which becomes lodged in a particular being is in conflict with life in general. This conflict between the moment of particularity in relation to universal life constitutes, as in a sick organism, the positivity and destiny of history. Hegel had studied this schism within man and human history in his early works. By perceiving in organic illness a prefiguration of the consciousness which is always internally divided within itself, and is an unhappy consciousness in so far as it is the consciousness of 'the positivity of life as the unhappiness of life', Hegel alters the meaning of his comparison. Human self-consciousness is able to triumph just where the organism fails. It is quite true that 'the sickness of the animal is the origin of spirit' and that there is some truth, though not the whole truth, in Nietzsche's theme of *man the sick animal*.⁶ But man is essentially the being who can transgress the limit by internalizing it and who can bestow a spiritual meaning upon death by means of his entire history, thus making something positive out of a negative. 'It is life which bears death and preserves itself through death that is the life of the spirit.' Again, the master who risks his life, but without a thought for death, because he never for a moment flinches before it, does not bring himself to the level of the slave who has 'trembled to the very roots of his being'. If he were not to rise above this anxiety over death, the slave would indeed be merely a sick animal, having really internalized a sickness. But by transcending it, once he has recognized it, he opens up new perspectives and makes the life of spirit a *creative* life which continually surpasses its destiny.

We have dwelt at some length on Hegel's account of universal life because it seemed necessary for an understanding of man's situation at the centre of this life. It is a description of the significance that life has for us, although this significance is profoundly hidden from individuals by themselves. It is (human) self-consciousness to which organic life must refer for clarification.

In *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel presents self-consciousness as generalized *desire*. As such it is simply the tautology 'I am I',⁷ or the movement which produces this unity, and which must reproduce for itself the process we have discovered in universal life. In Hegel's language, self-consciousness is *mediation*, and it is this which expresses the relation between desire and its object. The latter is at first the world around it, just as the world of the particular living creature is its *Umwelt*. In the next state, it is life itself, envisaged as a totality, and desire is directed essentially 'towards life itself'. To desire and to desire life are *at first* one and the same thing; except that life then appears as something *external* to the self and alien to it. The life of the self becomes an object to it, spread before it in the external world. Desire, or the absolute impulse that we recognized in the life of an individuality, can only be for itself by discovering itself in an external world.

Hegel's analysis of this phenomenon is much too brief to allow us to extrapolate its sense so far as to see in it a phenomenological description comparable to what it is usual to find in modern philosophers. Strictly speaking, there is no object which is simply an object, or any subject that is only a subject, one without and the other within. My internal life does not exist as such; rather it exists through my exchange with the world, or in my projects which alone confer a meaning upon what is outside. Hegel returns to this point in connection with the nature of human individuality, of its own body, the world which is its world and is such that one cannot be understood apart from the other. 'Probably the chief gain from phenomenology⁸ is to have united extreme subjectivism and extreme objectivism in its notion of the world or of rationality.'

In relating to this world, desire must rediscover itself, but it is unable to recognize itself without passing through the mediation of this world. Thus the self appears to itself as an immediate datum of the external world, even at the bare level of life. Similarly, my organic life forms the object of the self's desire, and through the resistance which it offers or opposes to its negation the self learns the meaning of its independence. However, self-consciousness must find its satisfaction and fulfil itself in this diremption. But it can only achieve this if it appears in the form of an *other* Self, another living self-consciousness. 'Self-consciousness attains its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness.'⁹ The existence of the Other is an ontological condition of my own existence.

Just as the life of an individuality can only be fulfilled by finding itself in another individuality, so the desire that constitutes the self can only exist if it is for itself an *object* of another desire. Thus the desire of life becomes the desire of another desire, or rather, in view of the necessary reciprocity of the phenomenon, human desire is always *desire of the desire of another*. Thus, in human love, desire appears to the self as the desire of the desire of another. The self needs to be beheld by the Other. For the self is essentially desire. Thus what the self expects to find in the Other is desire of its desire. It is only the animal that satiates itself in abstract negation or an indulgence that is a kind of death. But the self's desire must perpetuate itself, and this it can only accomplish if its object is also desire, a desire at once identical with its own desire and alien to it. Thus the self appears in the Other and the Other appears as the self. Each exists only through this reciprocal recognition: 'they recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another'.¹⁰

However, the recognition which appears to be immediately forthcoming in love is open to the danger of foundering again upon the lifeless in-itself. This is why Hegel gives a somewhat different account of the process of mutual recognition between one self-consciousness and another. In order to exist, each self-consciousness must be recognized by another, consequently each demands from the other the recognition without which

it could not exist, except perhaps as a living thing, but not as consciousness of universal life, or absolute desire. The consequence is the familiar struggle for life and death, a struggle for prestige in which man confronts man to gain recognition as a man. For without this recognition in successful struggle each would be unable to 'prove themselves and each other'.

But the consequences of this strife are deceiving and lead to an impasse. The truth which should result from it disappears into pure nature with the death of the combatants. The moment of nature is always present, forever intimately interwoven with the reciprocity between one self-consciousness and another; it is the source of their diremption and it remains essential. The role of this moment of nature is even more evident in the unilateral recognition of the master by the slave. The slave is only truly a slave of universal life from which he has recoiled through the fear of death. But through the fundamental process of labour he becomes capable of subjugating this 'indestructible substance' more effectively than was ever possible for the master. We shall see later how labour in general, together with the effective recognition of work by the other, is able to lead human existence to its truth. For the moment, it is important to notice that Hegel poses this struggle to the death and the phenomenon of labour and unilateral recognition, not as the basic facts of history, but as the very conditions of self-consciousness; they *ground* history while making it possible. Similarly, the Stoic's abstract recognition that makes it possible to transcend slavery, although already contained in the pure reciprocity of self-consciousness, is nevertheless insufficient, for it results in a merely abstract freedom, a formal equality of the very kind that Marx later denounces in the fiction of equality of rights which suppresses slavery but countenances the proletariat.

All the conditions of human existence or, as Hegel puts it, of self-consciousness of life, are contained in the need of desire for recognition in another desire, or in *intersubjectivity* which is the sole means by which consciousness of life may become something other than a reflection of this life. It is through this necessary intersubjectivity and the relation with nature or universal life that Humanity and History, or, in Hegel's terminology, Spirit, are founded:

What consciousness has further to become aware of is the experience of what mind is – this absolute substance, which is the unity of the different self-related and self-existent self-consciousnesses in the perfect freedom and independence of their opposition as component elements of that substance: Ego that is 'we,' a plurality of Egos, and 'we' that is a single Ego.¹¹

Truth and existence

What Hegel calls Necessity is a necessity of meaning which progressively unfolds itself; 'it is hidden in the events that happen and only appears in the end'. Thus universal life refers back to consciousness of life, for only the latter is capable of clarifying the blind necessity in which it is grounded. Similarly, self-consciousness of life repeats the movement of living creatures. But here *meaning* already exists as such in the interweaving of desires which are expressed by the mediating action of *recognition* which grounds the *universality* of self-consciousness. This universality is essential to the *absolute impulse* and must be realized through the mediating progression of the spirit. Perhaps it is possible to see a way of getting the better of Lucien Herr's comment that 'the transition is always guided by sentiment' without, however, falling into the errors of a panlogical interpretation, by avoiding altogether the use of the term 'deduction', which is ill suited because the dialectic has both creative and descriptive features and is at the same time conceptual (in Hegel's sense of the term). It is the *Concept* itself which becomes explicit through the three essential moments which are at the root of human history, namely, self-consciousness, the *other* self-consciousness, and universal life, or nature as an independent subsistence. For the rest, Hegel was perfectly clear about the concrete character of this necessity; he does not contrast it to description or to the *a posteriori*: 'It is the concept which alienates itself and is the development of *necessity as a datum of intuition*, yet at the same time, through this necessary intuition, it is self-subsistent and knows it conceptually.' To find its counterpart, we should have to approach the Hegelian concept of necessity in terms of the contemporary method of intentional analysis.

Perhaps we should have given more attention to the role played by 'the subsistence of nature' in the process of recognition. Without it the struggle between self-consciousness would result in their pure and simple dissolution. Death and pleasure are uniquely 'states of dissolution', for they lack an *objective* aspect or *subsistence*.

Labour, on the other hand, is desire *restrained and checked*, evanescence delayed and postponed; in other words, labour shapes and fashions the thing. The negative relation to the object passes into the *form* of the object, into something that is permanent and remains; because it is just for the labourer that the object has independence.¹²

This quotation contains the essence of what we wish to demonstrate. If we add that *thought* is in turn defined by Hegel as the labour which extracts the form of nature, and is as such the truth of labour which reveals that 'by the fact that the form is objectified, it does not become

something other than the consciousness moulding the thing through work, for just that form is his pure self-existence, which therein becomes truly realized',¹³ we may begin to understand how a rationality or a truth may be generated at this level by the dialectic. What we are dealing with here are the very conditions of *reason*, provided that it is true that the necessity of its *emergence* is identical with its *content*. Thus reason is itself grounded as a human event, and so, too, *spirit*, which is the history of that event.

Labour has a double function. First of all, labour humanizes nature, giving it the form of self-consciousness. It manifests externally what it is in itself, appearing thus as a *work*, a human Object (*die Sache selbst*) and no longer a mere thing (*Ding*) as it was at the level of perception. Nature ceases to be a power over which man has no control and before which he trembles (God without man). *In-itself*, in its cosmic significance, nature was already self-consciousness; it now becomes such *for-itself*. Man discovers himself through this labour and is reconciled to nature. The slave does not yet understand that he liberates himself through labour no less than the warrior who transcends life by risking it. The slave does not realize it, but the Stoic achieves this on his behalf. He understands the freedom of man, and this first truth will come to light when all men are free and recognized in themselves and for themselves in an immediate truth that was once merely formal.

Second, labour conveys a real coherence and universality upon human existence. This second feature is no less important than the first because it alone authenticates, although the slave is still ignorant of it, that necessary recognition or universality which the slave appeared to have forsaken when he recognized the master without demanding recognition for himself. But recognition from someone whom one does not oneself recognize, or to recognize without recognition in turn, are both false mediations which reverse themselves. It thus becomes necessary for work to be recognized for itself. It is in work – independent and nevertheless a reflection of being-for-itself – that self-consciousness becomes recognizable by others. Furthermore, it must be recognized in practice, and this is the source of a new struggle between men. It is not any longer the struggle to the death which initiated the first movement of recognition, but it is still a conflict, because work has no meaning except as *collective work*. Ultimately, it is the entire *human species* in the full range of its internal conflict and unity which must find expression and *make itself* in this work which, consequently, is no longer a particular task but anticipates the fullness of its significance.

In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel returns to the theme of human work as the activity of each and all and the foundation of history to the extent that it is at all open to rational interpretation. In this connection it is essential to read the important chapter on the 'Thing'¹⁴ (*die Sache selbst*), which is the foundation of the general conditions of human history and

of a *living truth* which finds expression or, should we say, creates itself in the course of that history.¹⁵ Of course, the particular effort, inasmuch as it is particular, disappears, but what does not disappear, but is finally acknowledged, is the *disappearance of the disappearance*, which is nothing else than 'the Object itself'. It is simultaneously the product of each and of all. It is both for-the-others, in so far as it is objectified, and for-the-self, as its *alienated* meaning but nevertheless its *own* meaning. At this level a *meaning* of human history becomes a possibility, as a kind of *true value*; this meaning appears to be at once the projection of the nature of human self-consciousness and something open to rationalization and justification through mutual recognition at the level of created being. We shall understand that the Hegelian problem, which is our own, concerns *the relation between Truth and Existence* if we add the observation that the human object from which *The Phenomenology of Mind* develops as a history *sensu stricto* is what Hegel calls the Truth, 'the essential spiritual substance . . . in which the certainty consciousness has regarding itself is a "fact" – a real object before consciousness, an object born of self-consciousness as its *own*, without ceasing to be a free independent object in the proper sense';¹⁶ for the truth of the *universal predicate* becomes the *subject*, the living truth which creates itself and is its own guarantee. We may ask how a truth can be the work of men, raised at the very heart of existence through the mediation of existence which it simultaneously transcends: *the humanity-god* simultaneously vindicated by the *God-man*. Hegel does not resolve this problem in a clear fashion; but is that possible? It is the same problem that today faces existentialism, Marxism and Christianity. At all events, the merit of the *Phenomenology* is to have raised the *foundations* of the *human task* and its possible *rationality*, to have offered a means of access to these foundations at a time when the classical dogma of eternal truth and the notion of transcendental consciousness were tottering under the events of history.

Notes

1. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, translated by J. B. Baillie (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964), p. 224.
2. *ibid.*, p. 208 [Trans.].
3. *ibid.*, p. 227.
4. *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, Vol. I, 1803–4, p. 130.
5. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 326.
6. F. Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, translated by Horace B. Samuels (New York: Russell & Russell Inc., 1964), p. 155. [Trans.]
7. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 219. [Trans.]
8. Namely, that of Husserl and Heidegger; cf. M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, translated by C. Smith (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), Preface, p. xix.

9. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 226. [Trans.]
10. *ibid.*, p. 231.
11. *ibid.*, p. 227.
12. *ibid.*, p. 238. Hyppolite's italics.
13. *ibid.*, p. 239. [Trans.]
14. 'Perception, thing and deceptiveness', *ibid.*, pp. 161–78. [Trans.]
15. *ibid.*, p. 430.
16. *ibid.*, p. 431.

On the *Logic* of Hegel (1952)

Jean Hyppolite

The general conception of the *Logic*

‘What I call art’, writes André Malraux, ‘is the expression of hitherto unknown yet evident relationships between creatures or between creatures and objects.’ Everything transpires as though there were an immediate lived-experience that must be given expression, an expression which would be a discovery both in the sense of a revelation and an invention. The most general form of expression, which alone deserves the description since all others refer to it in some way, is human language, which might be called the logos of lived-experience or the logos of Being, its universal revelation. To express Being would seem to be the proper enterprise of man. It is the true significance of the consciousness which in this manner becomes a universal self-consciousness of Being, or logos of Being, and constitutes the very essence of the Hegelian *Logic*. In the strict sense of the term, the *Logic* is a rigorous poetic of Being which unfolds through the agency and mediation of man. It is the manifestation of a universal self-consciousness in the singular consciousness of the philosopher. It is the Idea which is manifest in human judgment and is not simply its arbitrary or subjective creation.

A description of philosophy conceived as a logic in the sense above seems paradoxical and immediately invites a variety of objections. Indeed, Hegel was so conscious of the paradox of the concept of Absolute Knowledge, in which Being is immediately reflected and in which thought is immediately Being, that he found it necessary to write a weighty introduction to his *Logic*, namely, *The Phenomenology of Mind*. The latter answers to the conviction of consciousness as thought that ‘Being is other than itself’, and that its subjective certainty is distinct from the objective truth to which it aspires.

It is not easy to abandon the representation of experience as a *milieu*

through which truth is offered to us or as an *instrument* by means of which we grasp truth.¹ But the instrument and milieu alike separate us permanently from the Absolute or from the Being that we wish to reflect upon. The result produced by this conception is inevitably an ineradicable scepticism, or a critical philosophy which distinguishes on the one hand an objective truth relative to human understanding and on the other an absolute, inaccessible in-itself which can only be the object of faith, or a radical transcendentalism. Hegelian philosophy rejects any notion of transcendence; it is a rigorous philosophical attempt to remain on the ground of immanence and not leave it. There is no question of another world; there is no thing-in-itself, no transcendence. And yet finite human thought is not trapped in its own finitude; it surpasses itself and what it reveals or manifests is Being itself. Thus it is not a case of man expressing Being more or less adequately; it is Being itself which finds expression and testament in man. Philosophy, as Absolute Knowledge, is this very expression, and the philosophy of philosophy is simply the consciousness of the function of philosophy to express Being.

In *The Phenomenology of Mind* Hegel starts from the conception of naive consciousness which from the beginning draws a distinction between the subjective and the objective, certainty and truth, but against the background of a primordial unity. This distinction presupposes an original identity, a neutral experience, which is neither that of a subject nor that of an object. But consciousness develops only to the extent that it introduces such a distinction and reflects upon lived-experience through the schema of subject-object, certainty-truth. The *Phenomenology* is the description of the itinerary of finite or human consciousness in the course of transcending the distinction from which it arises and which is the source of its development and, as it were, its *modus operandi*. As a finite and singular consciousness I experience Being, I see it, I posit it as truth to be attained, and I seek to know it, that is to say, to give an exact formulation of what is given to me in immediacy. But this determination implies meaning or the foundation of some such congruency.

What can be the nature of the relationship between the concept which is the logos of Being and Being as it is experienced by the ego? Subjective certainty and objective truth are mutual opposites in so far as one is the concept (inseparable from language) and the other the object. Or rather, as Hegel observes, it makes no difference to call either one concept or object. For it is a question of the one providing the measure of the other, a phenomenon which constitutes the foundation of all human experience in so far as it develops through ups and downs in the course of which what was at first posited as an Absolute independent of the ego eventually appears relative and provisional. This distinction always reproduces itself at the very moment where consciousness transcends itself through reunion with its point of origin in the discovery (a historical discovery, the revel-

ation of Absolute Knowledge itself) that the object is itself a concept and the concept an object, or that Being itself is Meaning as Meaning is Being. It is in the moment where humanity achieves consciousness that the Hegelian *Logic* becomes possible and the distinction between certainty and truth, subject and object, is validated against the background of a more profound unity, namely, that of a thoroughly naive knowledge, which presupposes a primary identity, and most profound Absolute Knowledge which, as the transcendence of distinction, reunites with and validates the original starting point.

Being enters thought and finds expression, which is to say that it is thought and expressed through man who is its interpreter, although man is unaware of himself as the interpreter of Being until he has transcended in the course of his history (a practical history) the stages in the *alienation* of consciousness. Indeed, finite consciousness posits (this is the meaning of the *Phenomenology*) an absolute truth which transcends it, as it also posits the interpretation of Being, prior to Being itself, as a divine understanding from which human understanding can only be a fall. Consequently, *certainty* is always somewhere below the level of *truth*, which is at a level beyond, and in order to ground certainty, truth is necessarily also a concept, logos, but a divine, transcendent logos which as such always escapes when one is about to seize it. Finite consciousness which believes that it can grasp truth through its lived-experience always sees it recede, or withdraw into itself into a truth for-itself but not for consciousness. It is thus fundamentally an *unhappy consciousness* which projects on to a transcendental and always distant God the fundamental identity of certainty and truth, of the concept and Being.

The Phenomenology of Mind, which, as its title indicates, considers only the phenomenal aspect of consciousness, describes the historical transcendence of the unhappy consciousness. Man has come to the knowledge that the distant and transcendental God is effectively dead. There is a history of the mind in the sense that human consciousness overcomes its alienation and comprehends the significance of that separation which results in the confrontation of consciousness with immediate Being which it must reveal and express. At the beginning, as at the end of this history, one still finds in the immediate the *identity of Being and Meaning*. Naive consciousness is itself the Being from which it begins by distinguishing itself in order to express Being. Universal self-consciousness, Absolute Knowledge, is the very Being which achieves expression and is endowed with meaning, because the knowledge which appears in consciousness as the duality of subject-object appears in Being itself as an immanent knowledge of Being itself, of Being which becomes appearance and takes on Meaning and becomes intelligible to itself as it makes itself. That is why *The Phenomenology of Mind* and Hegel's *Logic* are each the whole of philosophy, but from two different aspects.

In the *Phenomenology* Hegel traces human experience in so far as that experience develops by means of its own relativity and, as it were, in the dimension of subjectivity. There is an immediacy, a primary original identity which separates because 'in the distinction that it implies [it] is the certainty of what is immediate or is sense-consciousness – the beginning from which we started'.² But it is the achievement of the consciousness of this identity through the reflexive differentiation of experience that constitutes the goal of the *Phenomenology*. Thus what sense-awareness could only envisage is now achieved. The immense richness which is given in immediacy is now revealed and given expression; those relationships or essences of experience, unknown yet evident, are now discovered and have become *appearances* in the development of human experience. But they have appeared in the mode of subjectivity, as moments of particularity, without anyone grasping their relationship to the totality of Being. They have appeared in a phenomenology, that is to say, as phenomena more or less torn out of Being. Undoubtedly, they were at first taken as absolutes by the consciousness that discovered them, but it afterwards relativized and transcended them and failed to see the truth which inhabited them. It ignored the truth in them both because the peculiar character of phenomenological analysis – which is comparable to a kind of critical philosophy – is precisely the distinction between the in-itself and the for-us, between an absolute objective and a subjective, and because this distinction necessarily relativizes all experience. But at the same time that these relationships reveal themselves, human consciousness is in the process of transcending the latter distinction, which ultimately becomes a distinction between a transcendental God and a finite consciousness eternally subordinate to him. Consciousness discovers that the transcendent is nothing else than the original unity, or primary immediacy. Thus it rethinks this primary immediacy, as it were, to the second power which through consciousness then becomes Absolute Knowledge, the postulated identity of certainty and truth, of the concept and Being. The entire process has the form of a cycle – a cycle that is essential to the Hegelian system inasmuch as it is a philosophy of integral immanence – in which, once the goal of Absolute Knowledge is achieved, it validates the point of departure independently of the mediations of critical reflection. The latter, however, far from being superfluous, is in fact essential because it reveals that the immediacy which was only *envisaged*, or proposed for knowledge, is implicitly knowledge, self-interpretation, and mediation. Henceforth, Absolute Knowledge is no longer *the knowledge of consciousness*, but *the knowledge of immediacy itself*, its internal interpretation, and its mediation through human thought (the Being which is knowledge of itself).³ Meaning is no longer subjective meaning opposed to objective Being, but the very meaning of Being. If it is possible any more to speak of subjectivity, it must be to refer to a

subjectivity which is Being itself, or what Hegel has in mind when he says that the whole of his philosophy 'depends on grasping and expressing the ultimate truth not as Substance but as Subject as well'.⁴

Hegel's presentation is extremely rigorous and difficult, and it might be well to express its intention in a more simple statement. In the *Phenomenology* Hegel presents both a revelation (which through expression is also a creative discovery) of what today we call *essences*, in the Husserlian sense, and an itinerary for man whereby he may transcend the relativity of human knowledge which derives either from an ineffable substance or from a transcendental God. In the *Phenomenology*, we have a study in the unveiling of these essences which has been the aim of artists and philosophers. But these interpretations are distinguished from Being itself and remain human, or more or less evident or subjective interpretations that are not grounded ontologically and claim no intrinsic necessity. The result of a phenomenology that refuses to become Absolute Knowledge after the logic of Hegel is something like a philosophy of culture which, indeed, constructs an inventory of the whole wealth of experience and its modes of expression, but does not go beyond humanism or man's interpretation of Being.

In such an endeavour, the phantom of the thing-in-itself never fails to arise and to send humanism back to faith beyond all knowledge. In an important essay from the Jena period on 'Faith and knowledge',⁵ Hegel in fact argues that humanism and faith depend upon an inaccessible transcendence. Now contemporary philosophy is most often to be found oscillating between these two poles, always trying to come to rest at one or the other. All the same, it remains a philosophy of consciousness, but one which develops much further the task undertaken by Hegel in the *Phenomenology*. Contemporary phenomenology aims at the description, by abstraction from the lived-experience of a particular consciousness, of the structural essences of all human experience which, in so far as they are given expression and enter the domain of logos, translate the Singular into the Universal. However, the translation of the lived-singular into the universal must be in accordance with its own possibility, just as the essences must be shown to be truly the essential structures of Being; otherwise they are open to the dangers of absolute subjectivity. That is why a phenomenological philosophy culminates in the renunciation of philosophy as such – as a strict science – and becomes, if you will, an anthropology or humanism, but not strictly philosophy. Perhaps one should speak of the descent of philosophy into literature, provided one notes also that literature itself rises to the search for those unknown yet evident relationships and aspires to become philosophy, though it can never achieve that. The philosophy of consciousness inevitably ends in this subjectivization, even when it professes a concept of the

transcendental ego. Its fate is expressed in the following comment from a contemporary philosopher:

Its development is material or within singular essences and its impulse comes from the necessity to transcend each one of them. It is not a philosophy of consciousness but only a philosophy of the concept which can yield a theory of knowledge. Creative necessity does not lie in the necessity of action but in a dialectical necessity.

It is clear that the Hegelian *Phenomenology* is not intended to remain at the level of phenomenology, but to go beyond it and to arrive at an ideal genesis of the essences hidden in experience – and at times in the contingency of history – in order to demonstrate that these essences are related through a dialectical necessity grounded in the absolute identity of thought and Being which reveals itself as open to thought and understanding. The logos of Being is Being reflecting upon itself. In turn, Absolute Knowledge, or logic ontologized, is realized through its validation of the phenomenology. It proves, in effect, that the Absolute is subject, reflects upon itself and is self-intelligible, and that in its highest manifestation its significance is evident in human consciousness. It is most important not to lose sight of the correspondence between the *Phenomenology* and the *Logic*. They are the same essences which, in the former, are revealed through human experience (and there is nothing that is not part of human experience) and, in the latter, are manifest in the thought of Being itself as a universal self-consciousness which expresses the absolute meaning of Being and is simultaneously its revelation.

Conversely, again, there corresponds to every abstract moment of Absolute Knowledge a mode in which mind as a whole makes its appearance. As the mind that actually exists is not richer than it [Absolute Knowledge], so, too, mind in its actual content is not poorer.⁶

Thus the Hegelian *Logic* constructs the dialectic of those essences revealed in experience and, as Being reflecting upon itself independently of human consciousness, provides their validation. It is not man who creates philosophy; philosophy creates itself through man, and the philosophy of philosophy is founded upon the consciousness of a corresponding ideal genesis, the attempt to ground metaphysics as a logic of philosophy.

The general schema of the *Logic*

Hegel's *Logic*, as Benedetto Croce has expressed it, is a logic of philosophy. For Hegel thought is never formal. It is always thought of Being, thought of the 'thing itself'. There is, therefore, no question of formulating the general laws of analytic thought, apart from all content or meaning. On the contrary, the concept, judgment and reason are considered in relation to the development of meaning and not as tools of logic. The guiding notion is the concept of form in which meaning is constituted by the content of thought, namely, the Absolute. Hegel's *Logic*, as the logic of philosophy, is the expression of absolute Being in so far as it is open to expression and given voice in the variety of philosophies that have arisen in human history. Each of the philosophies of the past has expressed the Absolute from a certain standpoint, just as the Leibnitzian monad expresses the entire universe from its point of view. In a work from his Jena period Hegel wrote, concerning the great philosophical systems, that 'Every philosophy is perfect in itself and, like an authentic work of art, contains within itself a totality.'⁷ In each philosophical system the Absolute is thought and finds its expression. The comparison with a work of art reflects Schelling's influence in the Jena period. But in his lectures on aesthetics Hegel shows equally how poetry – in its most general sense – borders upon philosophy in so far as it employs a language which constitutes the existence of universal self-consciousness because it permits the translation of the limits and particularity of singular experience on to the plane of the Universal. It is language which creates the individuation of the Universal, or the manifestation of the existential unity of the Singular and the Universal. Language announces simultaneously the object of which one is speaking and the subject who speaks; language is the voice that 'the moment it speaks, recognizes itself as no longer a voice without a self'.

Hegel's *Logic* develops Kant's discovery in the Transcendental Logic of the identity of the conditions of the objects of experience with the very conditions of the knowledge of experience. Kant, however, refused to turn the Transcendental Logic into a logic of philosophy and left the phantom of the thing-in-itself floating beyond possible experience. But Hegel pushes to the limit Kant's conception of the identity of nature and the thought of nature, and seizes upon the categories not just as schematized concepts of phenomena but as expressions of the Absolute. There is nothing beyond the categories through which the Absolute is expressed as at once an object and the thought of the object. Each category is a *particular moment of that primary identity* and is enriched and developed in a particular philosophical system, although its refutation is the result of its inadequacy due to the particularity or partiality of its standpoint. However, it is this very partiality which makes possible history in the

strict sense.⁸ Each category is the Whole, or the Absolute, and though it is a particular and inadequate expression, it is nevertheless a necessary expression, considered as a stage in a developmental process.

There is thus a certain correspondence between the *actual genesis* of the history of philosophy and the *ideal genesis* of the categories in Hegel's *Logic*. But the parallel is not a perfect one. For history is subject to temporal vicissitudes and particular situations. As long as there is meaning which has not found expression – or is alienated – there will be, indeed, perhaps there must be, misunderstanding. The Hegelian attempt to locate the categories in a rearrangement that would demonstrate their internal pattern suggests a comparison with the mathematician who might struggle to rethink systematically the various concepts of mathematics that have appeared in history. But the comparison falters because the mathematician can abstract from the existential relationships behind his concepts. By contrast, the logic of philosophy, though not restricted to an actual genesis, which is the condition of the *appearance* in human experience of the categories of the Absolute, must present an ideal genesis and explicate the dialectic which binds the categories one to another due to their mutual inadequacies and the necessity of transcendence which is the internal dynamic of their development. As a logic of philosophy, Hegel's *Logic* presupposes all the systems of philosophy to which he makes continual reference in the comments appended to the *Logic*.⁹ But at the same time the *Logic* attempts to substitute in place of the actual history of these systems an ideal genesis which would reveal the connection between all the categories. The latter are no longer seen as historical moments but as moments of the logos, of a reflection of Being at once intuitive, since it is always the thought of an immediate totality which includes Being and itself, and discursive, since it presents in mediated thought the latter totality in each of its aspects, stopping at each one, appearing to dwell upon and to enrich it as though it were the only aspect, finally to discover its inadequacy and the necessity of transcending it. 'In reality there exists no essential hard and fast distinction drawn between what appears to be the concepts and the development that pervades them.'

Everything happens as though the one and only category, the Absolute, were assuming specific forms and developing itself to the point where it has exhausted its riches, while remaining externally the same category, the same absolute reflection of Being which develops and forms itself to the point where it can validate its own point of origin. This thought is necessarily cyclical. It furnishes its own proof through its own development and in turn this proof, or dialectic, far from being an instrument employed externally upon Being, is in fact an internal development which integrates Being. The proof or dialectic is not external to its object, the Absolute; it is its own movement. Nor is it the instrument of a knowledge

alien to its object. It is the Absolute itself which posits itself in this manner. Indeed, it is Absolute precisely on account of this mode of positing itself, that is to say, becoming only in the end what it pretends to be in the beginning. The Absolute exists only through positing itself. 'Of the Absolute it must be said that it is essentially a result.'¹⁰ Thus we may understand the development of Hegel's *Logic*, as starting from Being and progressing towards the concept, or Meaning, while in this very movement positing Meaning as Being, in order to return to its starting point and there perhaps to initiate a new cycle. Indeed, the cyclical form of the *Logic* is expressed in the phrase: '*Being is Meaning and Meaning is Being.*' The starting point is immediacy, or Being-in-itself which pretends to be an absolute origin, and which, in so far as it develops, assumes its proper expression as Meaning. But in turn Meaning becomes Being, reverts to immediacy, and is absorbed as the past of what was a future. It is remarkable to note how in his early works, where he uses the ideas of positivity and destiny, Hegel had given a concrete expression to what in the *Logic* he would formulate with such universality. The absolute Idea with which the *Logic* terminates, the identity of Being and Meaning, leads back to an original immediacy, but in this restored form this immediacy presents itself as nature. Nature is the Absolute Idea as it exists in immediacy, such that there is an *unmediated* identity between nature and the logos, a *posited* identity which, once it has become for-itself, is mind, in which nature again reflects upon itself as logos.

Let us consider further that *identity of Meaning and Being*, the demonstration of which is the substance of the *Logic*. The moment which mediates the categories of Being and the concept or Meaning is the moment of Essence. The understanding of Hegel's *Logic* lies in the unfolding of the categories in respect of these fundamental aspects: the logic of Being or Immediacy, the logic of Essence or Reflection, the logic of the concept or Meaning. The first is the eternal present of Being; the second is the eternal past of Being: '*Wesen ist was gewesen ist.*'¹¹ The third is the eternal future of Being which continuously becomes present, so that temporality is the very eternity of the concept, or the Meaning which is the subjectivity of Being and which confounds itself with and loses itself in Being. Being, and the same is true of nature, is a lost meaning, yet a meaning that exists only as Being. It is not an ought-to-be, a *sollen* which would be the expression of a false infinity of the future, just as the idea of an origin, of an absolute immediacy, is the expression of a false infinity of the past. The significance of the Absolute as subject lies in its being the concrete identity of immediacy and mediation, of intuition and discursive reason. Mediation is not to be understood as an intermediary but as a concrete totality. In the *Phenomenology*, when speaking of the Christian religion, Hegel enunciates the eternal return of Meaning to Being as the law of their reciprocity. Christianity is always

tempted to return to an absolute origin, to rediscover the authentic message of the man-god, and the various schools and churches have sought purification in the return to this absolute: 'This reversion to the primitive is based on the instinct to get at the concept, the ultimate principle; but it confuses the origin, in the sense of the immediate existence of the first historical appearance, with the simplicity of the concept.'¹² This confusion is a constant one, for the search for an origin, or the quest of immediacy, always haunts our mind. But the opposite is equally true, that we are haunted by a meaning which can only be a distant future and which stands in radical opposition to the immediacy of Being. Between the two options, the thought which separates appearance, or existence, from essence, or the conditions of the intelligibility of existence, results in the conception of two worlds, one of which is the reason for the other. The consciousness which can represent to itself immediacy raises this essential mediation to the Absolute in a form which is appropriate to it by using the categories of Space and Time to represent the mediation itself in the mode of the immediate: 'The conditions "past" and "distance" are, however, merely the imperfect form in which the immediateness gets mediated or made universal.'¹³

Thus the logos of Being expresses primarily the immediacy of Being through the development of the categories for the description of immediacy which are then presupposed in any description of Sense-awareness. Mediation is, of course, necessary, but as a Protean capacity for assuming different forms. Although thought is always the total and integral thought of Being, an intuitive thought, it nevertheless abstracts from its own wealth and development and posits itself originally as Being and Non-Being, or as the permanent oscillation from the one to the other, an *oscillation* which internalizes contradiction. Being is Non-Being since it comes into being; it is a continual nihilation and yet it always is, since it never ceases to come into being. Concrete thought is the disequilibrium of mediation which proceeds from one term to the other, unable ever to think them through in terms of each other. The categories of Quality and Quantity express the immediacy of Being and its disequilibrium. With the appearance of one category, the other disappears and the movement of mediation is precisely this conjunction and disjunction of categories which deny each other and yet necessitate each other. Contradiction is present in immediacy in the most critical form. In connection with these categories, it is well known how Hegel returns to some of the classics of the history of philosophy, Parmenides and Heraclitus, as well as the Atomists. By means of the category of Measure, the concrete unity of qualitative and quantitative being, Hegel sought to express the most profound notion of Greek thought which was the instrument for the transition to the categories of Essence, as in Plato.

The categories of Essence manifest not only the *immediate* opposition

between Being and Non-Being, but also the *reflection* of Being which has internalized Non-Being. In this case mediation is no longer an immediate process but is reflection from one term to another. Very briefly, one might say that the contradiction involved here is the opposition between intelligible essence and appearance. Being no longer passes over into Non-Being; instead, it appears (not only to consciousness, the Latin word *videtur* has the double sense of 'to be seen' and 'to seem'), but to itself. Being reduplicates itself in such a way that appearance is just as necessary to essence as essence is to appearance, and these two realms simultaneously demand and contradict one another, each reflecting the other. The postulation of this distinction is the logical foundation of the datum of history. Philosophers such as Spinoza and Leibnitz have attempted to get at the very roots of the intelligibility of Being, but it is a question of the identity of intelligibility with appearances, of substance with its modes.

Just as in the *Phenomenology*, man alienates his own self-consciousness and makes out of it a God through whom he explains himself, so Being alienates itself from itself (reflects upon itself) and posits the Absolute beyond the appearance or phenomena. This reflection of Being becomes another Being, Essence, through which the intelligibility of Being is realized, distinct from the phenomenon, although the entire development of the category of Essence is to overcome that distinction through the complete identity of Essence and Appearance. The intelligibility of Essence is wholly present in Appearance, which is its effective reality, as Hegel calls it. As the latter it is the reality which actualizes itself, in which necessity is not distinct from the contingency of appearance. It is the reality that is an intelligible reality whose development is nothing else than the process of its own comprehension. Hegel shows that reality is not the manifestation of an Absolute that never ceases to be distinct from it. Reality is the manifestation that does not aim beyond itself; it is not dependent but sufficient in its own self-manifestation. Reality is not the presentation of an absolute content to which appearance is related as its form, for its form is identical with its content:

The Absolute inasmuch as it is a process of explanation which is self-sufficient, as a mode which is absolutely identical with itself, is not the manifestation of an interior opposed to something external but an absolute manifestation in-and-for-itself. For this reason it is nothing less than Reality.

The concrete procedure of naive thought which clings to the level of immediacy has raised it to the level of the intelligible sources of what it grasps as appearances, and thus it has reflected upon itself. But it returns to its naive state, this time, however, at a more intense level, and it is here

that the necessity that has been reflected upon reveals itself immediately. Essence is no longer the condition of reality but becomes its meaning and is identical with reality in so far as it is self-comprehension and no longer simply that which is understood.

In the third part of the *Logic*, which Hegel entitles 'Subjective logic', the Concept occupies the stage in place of *Essence* and the *Logic* becomes, properly speaking, a logic of meaning, where meaning is identified with a reality in process, or Being itself, the original Being that had revealed itself as meaning. The Absolute Idea in which the *Logic* culminates is this meaning as Being, the return to immediacy which is the very reality of mediation. The logic of the immediate, or Being, is the counterpart to the description of Sense-awareness, the first great metaphysics of Being. The logic of Essence is in turn the complement to the thought of the intelligibility of Sense-awareness, the metaphysics of Essence. But the logic of the Concept, through which the Absolute reveals itself as Subject, not only as a being-for-understanding, but as a self-understanding being that creates itself and, as it were, becomes identical with its concrete realization of its own demonstration, is the counterpart of those philosophical systems which since Kant have struggled to replace the thought of Essence with the thought of Meaning. But in Hegel the distinction between Being and Concept dissolves through mediation, Being as Concept and Concept as Being, and the unending shift from one to the other which constitutes self-reflection. The transition from Being to Essence (that is to say, to reflection) and the return of reflection to the immediate as meaning, through the reflection of reflection, is reminiscent of contemporary phenomenological thought.

The historian of philosophy might distinguish two lines of thought in Hegelianism. First of all, he might point to a philosophy of history which culminates in what may be called humanism (the most usual consequence of Hegelianism). He might then describe the notion of Absolute Knowledge which, as the external reflection upon the philosophies of the past, constitutes no less an internal philosophy of complete immanence in which thought abstracts from Time everything but the external temporality of mediation and thus transcends history. Is it possible to reconcile the Hegelian philosophy of history (which is strictly a philosophy of human history) with the notion of Absolute Knowledge in the *Logic*? Perhaps we should adopt the suggestion in the *Phenomenology* that we consider history as simply the preparation of Absolute Knowledge, or, in other words, a reflexive logic of philosophy. But that would imply some sort of end to history as we know it, or at least the appearance of an absolutely new phase of human history. Absolute Knowledge would at the same time transcend humanism, since self-consciousness only expresses the adventure of Being, and, as a philosophy of the Absolute, it would itself transcend all history. The identity postulated between Meaning and Being

(or the death of God) would inaugurate a new departure to which the notion of history would no longer be proper.

Notes

1. Introduction, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, translated by J. B. Baillie (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964), p. 133.
2. *ibid.*, p. 806.
3. *ibid.*, p. 86.
4. *ibid.*, p. 80. [Trans.]
5. 'Glauben und Wissen', in *Erste Druckschriften*.
6. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 806.
7. 'Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems', in *Erste Druckschriften*.
8. Cf. The alienation of knowledge, not only in consciousness, but also in nature and history, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 806; and the remark from an earlier fragment on Absolute Knowledge: 'Philosophy must alienate itself'.
9. *Science of Logic*, translated by W. H. Johnson and L. G. Struthers (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961).
10. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 82. [Trans.]
11. 'We may note that in the German auxiliary verb "sein" the past tense is expressed by the term for Essence (Wesen): we designate past being as *gewesen*.' *The Logic of Hegel*, translated by W. Wallace, from the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), chapter viii, section 112. [Trans.]
12. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 764.
13. *ibid.*, p. 763.

Hegel's existentialism¹ (1948)

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Jean Hyppolite, who first became known through his annotated translation of the *Phénoménologie de l'esprit*, has since published his *Genèse et structure de la Phénoménologie de l'esprit*, which is bound to mark a decisive step in French studies of Hegel.² All the great philosophical ideas of the past century – the philosophies of Marx and Nietzsche, phenomenology, German existentialism, and psychoanalysis – had their beginnings in Hegel; it was he who started the attempt to explore the irrational and integrate it into an expanded reason which remains the task of our century. He is the inventor of that reason, broader than the understanding, which can respect the variety and singularity of individual consciousness, civilizations, ways of thinking, and historical contingency but which nevertheless does not give up the attempt to master them in order to guide them to their own truth. But, as it turns out, consciousness's successors have placed more emphasis on what they reject of his heritage than on what they owe to him. If we do not despair of a *truth* above and beyond divergent points of view, if we remain dedicated to a new classicism, an organic civilization, while maintaining the sharpest sense of subjectivity, then no task in the cultural order is more urgent than re-establishing the connection between, on the one hand, the thankless doctrines which try to forget their Hegelian origin and, on the other, that origin itself. That is where their common language can be found and a decisive confrontation can take place. Not that Hegel himself offers the truth we are seeking (there are several Hegels, and even the most objective historian will be led to ask which of them went furthest), but all our antitheses can be found in that single life and work. There would be no paradox involved in saying that interpreting Hegel means taking a stand on all the philosophical, political and religious problems of our century. The great interest of Hyppolite's lecture is that, as far as existentialism is concerned, it begins the translation which will illuminate the discussions

of our time. As is quite natural, the historian tempered the philosopher every step of the way. Since our own aims are non-historical, let us follow this lecture freely rather than textually, to disagree occasionally and constantly to comment.

Kierkegaard, the first to use 'existence' in the modern sense of the word, deliberately set himself up in opposition to Hegel. The Hegel he had in mind was the late Hegel, who treated history as the visible development of a logical system, who sought in the relationships between ideas the final explanation of events, and who subordinated the individual experience of life to the life appropriate to ideas, as to a destiny. This Hegel of 1827 offers us nothing but a 'palace of ideas', to use Kierkegaard's phrase, where all historical antitheses are overcome, but only by thought. Kierkegaard is right in objecting that mere thought is not enough to enable the individual to overcome the contradictions facing him, that he is faced with dilemmas neither term of which he can accept. This last Hegel has understood everything except his own historical situation; he has taken everything into account except his own existence, and the synthesis he offers is no true synthesis precisely because it pretends ignorance of being the product of a certain individual and a certain time. Kierkegaard's objection, which is in profound agreement with that of Marx, consists in reminding the philosopher of his own inherence in history: where are you speaking from when you judge the world's development and declare that it attains perfection in the Prussian state, and how can you pretend to be outside all situations? Here the reminder of the thinker's own existence and subjectivity merges with the recall to history.

But if the Hegel of 1827 may be criticized for his idealism, the same cannot be said of the Hegel of 1807. The *Phénoménologie de l'esprit* is a history not only of ideas but of all the areas which reveal the mind at work: customs, economic structures and legal institutions as well as works of philosophy. It is concerned with recapturing a total sense of history, describing the inner workings of the body social, not with explaining the adventures of mankind by debates among philosophers. *Absolute knowledge*, the final stage in the evolution of the spirit as phenomenon wherein consciousness at last becomes equal to its spontaneous life and regains its self-possession, is perhaps not a philosophy but a way of life. It is a militant philosophy that we find in the *Phénoménologie de l'esprit*, not as yet a victorious one. (And besides, up until the *Principes de la philosophie du droit*, Hegel clearly states that philosophers do not create history but always give voice to a situation already established in the world before their appearance on the scene.³) The real debate between Marx and Hegel has nothing to do with the relationship of ideas to history; rather, it involves the conception of historical movement, which ends for the Hegel of 1827 in a hierarchical society whose meaning is

accessible to none except the philosopher but which Hegel of 1807 perhaps saw culminating in a genuine reconciliation between men.

What is certain in any case is that the *Phénoménologie de l'esprit* does not try to fit all history into a framework of pre-established logic but attempts to bring each doctrine and each era back to life and to let itself be guided by their internal logic with such impartiality that all concern with system seems forgotten. The Introduction states that the philosopher should not put himself in the place of human experiences; his task is simply to collect and decipher these experiences as history makes them available. It is in this sense that we can begin to speak of 'Hegelian existentialism', since he does not propose to connect concepts but to reveal the immanent logic of human experience in all its sectors. The question is no longer limited, as it was in the *Critique de la raison pure théorique*, to discovering what conditions make scientific experience possible, but is one of knowing in a general way how moral, aesthetic and religious experiences are possible, of describing man's fundamental situation in the face of the world and other men, and of understanding religions, ethics, works of art, economic and legal systems as just so many ways for man to flee or to confront the difficulties of his condition.⁴ Experience here no longer simply means our entirely contemplative contact with the sensible world as it did in Kant; the word reassumes the tragic resonance it has in ordinary language when a man speaks of what he has lived through. It is no longer a laboratory test but is a trial of life.

To be more exact, Hegel's thought is existentialist in that it views man not as being from the start a consciousness in full possession of its own clear thoughts but as a life which is its own responsibility and which tries to understand itself. All of the *Phénoménologie de l'esprit* describes man's efforts to reappropriate himself. At every period of history he starts from a subjective 'certainty', makes his actions conform to the directions of that certainty, and witnesses the surprising consequences of his first intention, discovering its objective 'truth'. He then modifies his project, gets under way once more, again becomes aware of the abstract qualities of his new project, until subjective certainty finally equals objective truth and in the light of consciousness he becomes fully what he already obscurely was. As long as this last stage of history remains unattained – and should it ever be reached, man, deprived of movement, would be like an animal – man, as opposed to the pebble which is what it is, is defined as a place of unrest (*Unruhe*), a constant effort to get back to himself, and consequently by his refusal to limit himself to one or another of his determinations.

Consciousness . . . therefore immediately becomes the act of surpassing the limit and, when it has incorporated this limit into itself, of

surpassing itself. . . . Consciousness thus suffers at its own hand the violence by which it spoils all limited satisfactions. Feeling this violence, anxiety may well shrink before the truth, may aspire and tend to save the very thing which is threatened with loss, but there is no calming this anxiety: its attempt to sink into a thoughtless inertia is in vain. . . . ⁵

Whatever relationships may be shown to exist between consciousness and the body or brain, all the discoveries of phrenology will not suffice to make consciousness a *bone*, for a bone is still a thing or a being, and if the only components of the world were things or beings, there would not be even a semblance of what we call man – that is a being which is not, which denies things, an existence without an essence.

Today this idea is trite, but it regains its force if one applies it, as did Hegel, to the relationships between life and our consciousness of it. Of course, all we say about life has to do in reality with consciousness of life, since we who talk about it are conscious of it. However, consciousness reappropriates as its own limit and source what preconscious life would have been. It would have been a force which disperses itself wherever it acts, a 'dying and becoming' which would not even be aware of itself as such. For there to be consciousness of life, that dispersion would have to be ended; it would have to become total and aware of itself – which is in principle impossible for life. An absence of being would have to come into the world, a nothingness from which being would be visible, such that consciousness of life, taken radically, is consciousness of death. Even the doctrines which would imprison us in our racial or local peculiarities and hide our humanity from us can only do so – since they are doctrines and propaganda – by forsaking the immediate life and borrowing shamefully from consciousness of death. Nazi ideology is not to be reproached for reminding men of the tragic but for using the tragic and the vertigo of death to give a semblance of force to prehuman instincts; in short, for obscuring the awareness of death. To be aware of death and to think or reason are one and the same thing, since one thinks only by disregarding what is characteristic of life and thus by conceiving death.

Man cannot be made unaware of death except by being reduced to the state of an animal, and then he would be a poor animal if he retained any part of his consciousness, since consciousness implies the ability to step back from any given thing and to deny it. An animal can quietly find contentment in life and can seek salvation in reproduction; man's only access to the universal is the fact that he exists instead of merely living. This is the price he pays for his humanity, and it is the reason why the idea of the sound man is a myth, closely related to Nazi myths. 'Man is the sick animal', said Hegel in an old text of his *Realphilosophie*

published by Hoffmeister. Life can only be thought of as revealed to a consciousness of life which denies it.

All consciousness is therefore unhappy, since it knows it is a secondary form of life and misses the innocence from which it senses it came. Judaism's historical mission has been to spread this sense of separation throughout the entire world, and, as Hyppolite said to his students during the war, we are all Jews to the extent that we care about the universal, refuse to resign ourselves to merely being, and want to exist.

Consciousness of death is, however, neither a dead-end nor an outer limit. There are two ways of thinking about death: one pathetic and complacent, which butts against our end and seeks nothing in it but the means of exacerbating violence; the other dry and resolute, which integrates death into itself and turns it into a sharper awareness of life. The young Hegel speaks more willingly of death; the older Hegel prefers to speak of negativity. The Hegel of the *Phénoménologie* juxtaposes the pathetic and logical vocabularies and makes us understand what role consciousness of death plays in the advent of humanity. Death is the negation of all particular given beings, consciousness of death is a synonym for consciousness of the universal, but it is only an empty or abstract universal as long as we remain at this point. We cannot in fact conceive nothingness except against a ground of being (or, as Sartre says, against the world). Therefore, any notion of death which claims to hold our attention is deceiving us, since it is in fact surreptitiously using our consciousness of being. To plumb our awareness of death, we must transmute it into life, 'interiorize' it, as Hegel said. The abstract universal which starts out opposed to life must be made concrete. There is no being without nothingness, but nothingness can exist only in the hollow of being, and so consciousness of death carries with it the means for going beyond it.

The only experience which brings me close to an authentic awareness of death is the experience of contact with another, since under his gaze I am only an object just as he is merely a piece of the world under my own. Thus each consciousness seeks the death of the other which it feels dispossesses it of its constitutive nothingness. But I do not feel threatened by the presence of another unless I remain aware of my subjectivity at the very moment his gaze is reducing me to an object; I do not reduce him to slavery unless he continues to be present to me as consciousness and freedom precisely when he is an object in my eyes. We cannot be aware of the conflict unless we are aware of our reciprocal relationship and our common humanity. We do not deny each other except by mutual recognition of our consciousness. That negation of everything and of others which I am is completed only by reduplicating itself through another's negation of it. And just as my consciousness of myself as death and nothingness is deceitful and contains an affirmation of my being and

my life, so my consciousness of another as an enemy comprises an affirmation of him as an equal. If I am negation, then by following the implication of this universal negation to its ultimate conclusion, I will witness the self-denial of that very negation and its transformation into coexistence. By myself I cannot be free, nor can I be a consciousness or a man; and that other whom I first saw as my rival is a rival only because he is myself. I discover myself in the other, just as I discover consciousness of life in consciousness of death, because I am from the start this mixture of life and death, solitude and communication, which is heading towards its resolution.

Domination, sadism and violence destroy themselves just as consciousness of death goes beyond itself. If each participant in the duel of consciousness, of fraternal enemies, succeeded in fatally wounding the other, nothing would be left; there would not even be a place for that hatred of the other and that affirmation of self which is the principle behind the struggle. Thus, the man with the most exact awareness of the human situation is not the master (since the master pretends ignorance of the foundation of being and communication underlying the play of his despair and pride) but the slave. The slave has been truly afraid, has given up trying to conquer by the sword, and he is the only one with experience of death because he alone has known the love of life. The master wants to exist for no one but himself, but in fact he seeks recognition of his mastery from someone and so is weak in his strength. The slave consents to exist only for others, but nevertheless it is he who chooses to go on living on these terms, and he therefore has strength in his weakness. Since he is better acquainted with man's vital core than the master, it is he who will finally have the only possible mastery – at the expense of nature, not of other people. His life is more frankly rooted in the world than is the master's, which is precisely why he knows better than the master what death means: he has really experienced anxiety, the 'fluidification of everything stable'. Human existence, which had been risk and guilt, becomes history through him, and mankind's successive decisions can be concentrated in one single act by which consciousness is made whole, and God becomes man, or if you prefer, man becomes God.

This is where Hegel's thought abandons its initial pessimism. Learning the truth about death and struggle is the long maturation process by which history overcomes its contradictions and fulfils the promise of humanity – present in the consciousness of death and in the struggle with the other – in the living relationship among men. This is also where Hegel stops being an existentialist, Hyppolite adds. Whereas for Heidegger we exist for the sake of death and the awareness of death remains fundamental to philosophy as well as to behaviour, Hegel transmutes death into a higher form of life. He therefore moves from the individual to history, whereas for Sartre there can be no remedy for the contradictions of the

for itself and the for others, with the result that his dialectic is truncated. One may say that in this sense the *Phénoménologie de l'esprit* makes possible a Communist philosophy of the party or a philosophy of the Church rather than a philosophy of the individual such as existentialism. It is true, adds Hyppolite again, that there are other ways of understanding existentialism. This last statement seems the most accurate, since we should note that, even in Heidegger, consciousness of death is not authentic life; the only attitude which does not deceive us is the one which also has a place for the fact of our existence. The decision we must make is to accept death, but that cannot be separated from the decision to live and to get a new grip on our fortuitous existence. As for the existence of the other and the historicity which results, Heidegger does not deny it. It has apparently been forgotten that the last part of *Sein und Zeit* is devoted to the notion of history.⁶ One might even say that what Heidegger lacks is not historicity but, on the contrary, an affirmation of the individual: he does not mention that struggle of consciousness and that opposition of freedoms without which coexistence sinks into anonymity and everyday banality. It is even more certain that French existentialists are not arrested at an awareness of death.

My death interrupts my life only when I die, and that only from the point of view of others. Death does not exist for me while I am alive; my project goes right through it without meeting any obstacles. The full impetus of my transcendence runs into no barriers; it alone determines when it shall run down, like the sea which strikes against a smooth shore and stops at a certain point, to go no further.⁷

And so I live not for death but for ever, and likewise, not for myself alone but with other people. A more complete definition of what is called existentialism than we get from talking of anxiety and the contradictions of the human condition might be found in the idea of a universality which men affirm or imply by the mere fact of their being and at the very moment of their opposition to each other, in the idea of a reason immanent in unreason, of a freedom which comes into being in the act of accepting limits and to which the least perception, the slightest movement of the body, the smallest action, bear incontestable witness.

Notes

1. Concerning J. Hyppolite's lecture of the same title, delivered on 16 February 1947, to l'Institut d'Etudes germaniques.

2. English translation of Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes* by J. B. Baillie, *Phenomenology of Mind* (New York, 1931) – Trans.

3. English translation of Hegel's *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* by T. M. Knox, *Philosophy of Right* (Oxford, 1945) – Trans.
4. English translation of Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* by Norman Kemp Smith, *Critique of Pure Reason* (London, 1933) – Trans.
5. *Phénoménologie de l'esprit*, trans. J. Hyppolite, Introduction, p. 71.
6. English translation of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, *Being and Time* (London, 1962) – Trans.
7. Simone de Beauvoir, *Pyrrhus et Cinéas*, p. 61.

Extract from *Being and Nothingness* (1943)

Jean-Paul Sartre

Husserl, Hegel, Heidegger

The philosophy of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries seems to have understood that once myself and the Other are considered as two separate substances, we cannot escape solipsism; any union of these substances must in fact be held to be impossible. That is why the examination of modern theories reveals to us an attempt to seize at the very heart of the consciousness a fundamental, transcending connection with the Other which would be constitutive of each consciousness in its very upsurge. But while this philosophy appears to abandon the postulate of the external negation, it nevertheless preserves its essential consequence; that is the affirmation that my fundamental connection with the Other is realized through *knowledge*.

When Husserl in his *Cartesian Meditations* and in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* attempts to refute solipsism, he believes that he can succeed by showing that a referral to the Other is the indispensable condition for the constitution of a world. Without going into the details of his theory, we shall limit ourselves to indicating his general position. For Husserl the world as it is revealed to consciousness is inter-monadic. The Other is present in it not only as a particular concrete and empirical appearance but as a permanent condition of its unity and of its richness. Whether I consider this table or this tree or this bare wall in solitude or with companions, the Other is always there as a layer of constitutive meanings which belong to the very object which I consider; in short, he is the veritable guarantee of the object's objectivity. And since our psycho-physical self is contemporary with the world, forms a part of the world, and falls with the world under the impact of the phenomenological reduction, the Other appears as necessary to the very constitution of this self. If I am to doubt the existence of my friend Pierre or of others in

general, then inasmuch as this existence is on principle outside my experience, I must of necessity doubt also my concrete being, my empirical reality as a professor having this or that tendency, these habits, this particular character. There is no privilege for *my* self: my empirical Ego and the Other's empirical Ego appear in the world at the same time. The general meaning of 'Others' is necessary to the constitution of each one of these 'Egos'. Thus each object, far from being constituted as for Kant, by a simple relation to the *subject*, appears in my concrete experience as polyvalent; it is given originally as possessing systems of reference to an indefinite plurality of consciousnesses; it is *on* the table, *on* the wall that the Other is revealed to me as that to which the object under consideration is perpetually referred – as well as on the occasion of the concrete appearances of Pierre or Paul.

To be sure, these views show progress over the classical positions. It is undeniable that the instrumental-thing from the moment of its discovery refers to a plurality of For-itselfs. We shall have to return to this point. It is also certain that the meaning of 'the Other' cannot come from the experience or from a reasoning by analogy effected on the occasion of the experience; on the contrary, it is in the light of the concept of *the Other* that the experience is interpreted. Does that mean that the concept of the Other is *a priori*? This we shall attempt to determine later. But in spite of these undeniable advantages Husserl's theory does not seem to us perceptibly different from Kant's. This is due to the fact that while my empirical Ego is not any more sure than the Other's, Husserl has retained the transcendental subject, which is radically distinct from the Ego and which strongly resembles the Kantian subject. Now what ought to be demonstrated is that it is not the parallelism of the empirical 'Egos' which throws doubt on the person but that of the transcendental subjects. This is because actually the Other is *never* that empirical person who is encountered in my experience; he is the transcendental subject to whom this person by nature refers. Thus the true problem is that of the connection of transcendental subjects who are beyond experience. If someone replies that from the start the transcendental subject refers to other subjects *for the constitution* of the noematic whole, it is easy to reply that it refers to them as-to *meanings*. The Other here would be a kind of supplementary category which would allow a world to be constituted, not a real being existing beyond this world. Of course the 'category' of the Other implies in its very meaning a reference from the other side of the world to a subject, but this reference could be only hypothetical. It has the pure value of the content of a unifying concept; it is valid in and for the world. Its laws are limited to the world, and the Other is by nature outside the world. Furthermore Husserl has removed the very possibility of understanding what can be meant by the extra-mundane *being* of the Other since he defines *being* as the simple indication of an infinite series

of operations to be effected. There could be no better way to measure being by knowledge. Now even admitting that knowledge in general measures being, the Other's being is measured in its reality by the knowledge which the other has of himself, not by that which I have of him. What I must attain is the Other, not as I obtain knowledge of him, but as he obtains knowledge of himself – which is impossible. This would in fact suppose the internal identification of myself with the Other. Thus we find here again that distinction on principle between the Other and myself which does not stem from the exteriority of our bodies but from the simple fact that each of us exists in interiority and that a knowledge valid for interiority can be effected only in interiority which on principle excludes all *knowledge* of the Other as he knows himself – i.e. as he is. Moreover Husserl understood this since he says that 'the Other' as he is revealed to our concrete experience is an *absence*. But within Husserl's philosophy, at least, how can one have a full intuition of an absence? The Other is the object of empty intentions; the Other on principle refuses himself to us and flees. The only reality which remains is therefore that of *my* intention; the Other is the empty noema which corresponds to my directing towards the Other, to the extent that he appears concretely in my experience. He is an ensemble of operations of unification and of the constitution of my experience so that he appears as a transcendental concept. Husserl replies to the solipsist that the Other's existence is as sure as that of the world, and Husserl includes in the world my psycho-physical existence. But the solipsist says the same thing: it is as sure, he will say, but more more sure. The existence of the world is measured, he will add, by the knowledge which I have of it; the case will not be otherwise for the existence of the Other.

Formerly I believed that I could escape solipsism by refuting Husserl's concept of the existence of the Transcendental 'Ego'. At that time I thought that since I had emptied my consciousness of its subject, nothing remained there which was privileged as compared to the Other. But actually although I am still persuaded that the hypothesis of a transcendental subject is useless and disastrous, abandoning it does not help one bit to solve the question of the existence of Others. Even if outside the empirical Ego there is *nothing other* than the consciousness *of* that Ego – that is a transcendental field without a subject – the fact remains that my affirmation of the Other demands and requires the existence beyond the world of a similar transcendental field. Consequently the only way to escape solipsism would be here again to prove that my transcendental consciousness is in its very being affected by the extra-mundane existence of other consciousnesses of the same type. Because Husserl has reduced being to a series of meanings, the only connection which he has been able to establish between my being and that of the Other is a connection

of *knowledge*. Therefore Husserl cannot escape solipsism any more than Kant could.

If now instead of observing the rules of chronological succession, we are guided by those of a sort of non-temporal dialectic, we shall find that in the solution which Hegel gives to the problem in the first volume of *The Phenomenology of Mind*, he has made significant progress over Husserl. Here the appearance of the Other is indispensable not to the constitution of the world and of my empirical 'Ego' but to the very existence of my consciousness as self-consciousness. In fact as self-consciousness, the Self itself apprehends itself. The equation 'Myself = myself' or 'I am I' is precisely the expression of this fact. At first this self-consciousness is pure self-identity, pure existence for itself. It has certitude of itself, but this certitude still lacks truth. In fact this certitude would be true only to the extent that its own existence for itself appeared to it as an independent object. Thus self-consciousness is first a syncretic relation without truth between a subject and an object, an object, which is not yet objectified and which is this subject himself. Since the impulse of this consciousness is to realize its concept by becoming conscious of itself in all respects, it tends to make itself valid externally by giving itself objectivity and manifest existence. It is concerned with making the 'I am I' explicit and producing itself as an object in order to attain the ultimate stage of development. This state in another sense is naturally the prime mover for the becoming of consciousness; it is self-consciousness in general, which is recognized in other self-consciousnesses and which is identical with them and with itself. The mediator is the *Other*. The Other appears along with myself since self-consciousness is identical with itself by means of the exclusion of every Other. Thus the primary fact is the plurality of consciousnesses, and this plurality is realized in the form of a double, reciprocal relation of exclusion. Here we are then in the presence of that connection by means of an internal negation which was demanded earlier. No external nothingness in-itself separates my consciousness from the Other's consciousness; it is by the very fact of being me that I exclude the Other. The Other is the one who excludes me by being himself, the one whom I exclude by being myself. Consciousnesses are directly supported by one another in a reciprocal imbrication of their being.

This position allows us at the same time to define the way in which the Other appears to me: he is the one who is other than I; therefore he is given as a non-essential object with a character of negativity. But this Other is also a self-consciousness. As such he appears to me as an ordinary object immersed in the being of life. Similarly it is thus that I appear to the Other: as a concrete, sensible, immediate existence. Here Hegel takes his stand on the ground not of a univocal relation which goes from me (apprehended by the *cogito*) to the Other, but of the

reciprocal relation which he defines as 'the self-apprehension of the one in the other'. In fact it is only in so far as each man is opposed to the Other that he is absolutely for himself. Opposite the Other and confronting the Other, each one asserts his right of being individual. Thus the *cogito* itself cannot be a point of departure for philosophy; in fact it can be born only in consequence of my appearance for myself as an individual, and this appearance is conditioned by the recognition of the Other. The problem of the Other should not be posited in terms of the *cogito*; on the contrary, the existence of the Other renders the *cogito* possible as the abstract moment when the self is apprehended as an object. Thus the 'moment' which Hegel calls *being for the Other* is a necessary stage of the development of self-consciousness; the road of interiority passes through the Other. But the Other is of interest to me only to the extent that he is another Me, a Me-object for Me, and conversely to the extent that he reflects my Me – i.e. is, in so far as I am an object for him. Due to the fact that I must necessarily be an object for myself only over there in the Other, I must obtain from the Other the *recognition* of my being. But if another consciousness must mediate between my consciousness *for itself* and itself, then the being-for-itself of my consciousness – and consequently its being in general – depends on the Other. As I appear to the Other, so I am. Moreover since the Other is such as he appears to me and since my being depends upon the Other, the way in which I appear – that is the moment of the development of my self-consciousness – depends on the way in which the Other appears to me. The value of the Other's recognition of me depends on the value of my recognition of the Other. In this sense to the extent that the Other apprehends me as bound to a body and immersed in *life*, I am myself only *an Other*. In order to make myself recognized by the Other, I must risk my own life. To risk one's life, in fact, is to reveal oneself as not-bound to the objective form or to any determined existence – as not-bound to life.

But at the same time I pursue the *death* of the Other. This means that I wish to cause myself to be mediated by an Other who is only other – that is by a dependent consciousness whose essential characteristic is to exist only for another. This will be accomplished at the very moment when I risk my life, for in the struggle against the other I have made an abstraction of my sensible being by *risking* it. On the other hand, the Other prefers life and freedom even while showing that he has not been able to posit himself as not-bound to the objective form. Therefore he remains bound to external things in general; he appears to me and he appears to himself as *non-essential*. He is the *Slave*; I am the *Master*; for him it is I who am essence. Thus there appears the famous 'Master-Slave' relation which so profoundly influenced Marx. We need not here enter into its details. It is sufficient to observe that the Slave is the Truth of

the Master. But this unilateral recognition is unequal and insufficient, for the truth of his self-certitude for the Master is a non-essential consciousness; therefore the Master is not certain of *being for himself as truth*. In order to attain this truth there is necessary 'a moment in which the master does for himself what he does as regards the Other and when the slave does as regards the Other what he does for himself'.² At this moment there will appear a self-consciousness in general which is recognized in other self-consciousnesses and which is identical with them and with itself.

Thus Hegel's brilliant intuition is to make me depend on the Other *in my being*. I am, he said, a being for-itself which is for-itself only through another. Therefore the Other penetrates me to the heart. I cannot doubt him without doubting myself, since 'self-consciousness is real only in so far as it recognizes its echo (and its reflection) in another'.³ Since the very doubt implies a consciousness which exists for itself, the Other's existence conditions my attempt to doubt it just as in the work of Descartes my existence conditions systematic doubt. Thus solipsism seems to be put out of the picture once and for all. By proceeding from Husserl to Hegel, we have realized immense progress: first, the negation which constitutes the Other is direct, internal and reciprocal; second, it calls each consciousness to account and pierces it to the deepest part of its being: the problem is posited on the level of inner being, of the universal and transcendental 'I'; finally in my essential being I depend on the essential being of the Other, and instead of holding that my being-for-myself is opposed to my being-for-others, I find that being-for-others appears as a necessary condition for my being-for-myself.

Yet in spite of the wide scope of this solution, in spite of the richness and profundity of the detailed insights with which the theory of the Master and the Slave is filled to overflowing, can we be satisfied with it?

To be sure, Hegel has posed the question of the being of consciousnesses. It is being-for-itself and being-for-others which he is studying, and he holds that each consciousness includes the *reality* of the other. Nevertheless it is certain that this ontological problem remains everywhere formulated in terms of knowledge. The mainspring of the conflict of consciousnesses is the effort of each one to transform his self-certitude into *truth*. And we know that this truth can be attained only in so far as my consciousness becomes as *object* for the Other at the same time as the Other becomes an *object* for my consciousness. Thus when idealism asks 'How can the Other be an object for me?', Hegel, while remaining on the same ground as idealism, replies: if there is in truth a Me for whom the *Other* is an object, this is because there is an *Other* for whom the Me is object. Knowledge here is still the measure of being, and Hegel does not even conceive of the possibility of a being-for-others which is not finally reducible to a 'being-as-object'. Thus a universal self-consciousness which seeks to disengage itself through all these dialectical phases is by

its own admission reducible to a purely empty formula – the ‘I am I.’ Yet Hegel writes, ‘This proposition regarding self-consciousness is void of all content.’⁴ And in another place he says ‘[It is] the process of absolute abstraction which consists in surpassing all immediate existence and which results in the purely negative being of consciousness identical with itself.’ The limiting term of this dialectical conflict, universal self-consciousness, is not enriched in the midst of its avatars; it is on the contrary entirely denuded. It is no more than the ‘I know that another knows me as me.’ Of course this is because for idealism absolute being and knowledge are identical. But what does this identification involve?

To begin with, this ‘I am I’, a pure, universal form of identity, has nothing in common with the concrete consciousness which we have attempted to describe in our Introduction. There we established that the being of self-consciousness could not be defined in terms of knowledge. Knowledge begins with *reflection* (*reflexion*), but the game of ‘the-reflection (*reflet*)-reflecting’ is not a subject-object dyad, not even implicitly. Its being does not depend on any transcendent consciousness; rather its mode of being is precisely to be in question for itself. We showed subsequently in the first chapter of Part Two that the relation of the reflection to the reflecting was in no way a relation of identity and could not be reduced to the ‘Me = Me’ or to the ‘I am I’ of Hegel. The reflection does not make itself be the reflecting; we are dealing here with a being which nihilates itself in its being and which seeks in vain to dissolve into itself as a *self*. If it is true that this description is the only one which allows us to understand the original fact of consciousness, then we must judge that Hegel has not succeeded in accounting for this abstract doubling of the Me which he gives as equivalent to self-consciousness. Finally we succeeded in getting rid of the pure unreflective consciousness of the transcendental ‘I’ which obscured it, and we showed that selfness, the foundation of personal existence, was altogether different from an Ego or from a reference of the Ego to itself. There can be, therefore, no question of defining consciousness in terms of a transcendental ego-ology. In short, consciousness is a concrete being *sui generis*, not an abstract, unjustifiable relation of identity. It is selfness and not the seat of an opaque, useless Ego. Its being is capable of being reached by a transcendental reflection, and there is a *truth* of consciousness which does not depend on the Other; rather the very *being* of consciousness, since it is independent of knowledge, pre-exists its truth. On this plane as for naive realism, being measures truth; for the truth of a reflective intuition is measured by its conformity to being: consciousness *was* there before it was known. Therefore, if consciousness is affirmed in the face of the Other, it is because it lays claim to a recognition of its being and not of an abstract truth. In fact it would be ill conceived to think that the ardent and perilous conflict between master and slave had for its sole stake the

recognition of a formula as barren and abstract as the 'I am I.' Moreover there would be a deception in this very conflict since the end finally attained would be universal self-consciousness, 'the intuition of the existing self by the self'. Here as everywhere we ought to oppose to Hegel Kierkegaard, who represents the claims of the individual as such. The individual claims his achievement as an individual, the recognition of his concrete being, and of the objective specification of a universal structure. Of course the *rights* which I demand from the Other posit the universality of *self*; respect of persons demands the recognition of my person as universal. But it is my concrete and individual being which flows into this universal and fills it; it is for that *being-there* that I demand rights. The particular is here the support and foundation of the universal; the universal in this case could have no meaning if it did not exist for the *purpose* of the individual.

This identification of being and knowledge results in a large number of errors or impossibilities. We shall consider them here under *two headings*; that is we shall marshal against Hegel a twofold charge of optimism.

In the first place Hegel appears to us to be guilty of an epistemological optimism. It seems to him that the *truth* of self-consciousness can appear; that is that an objective agreement can be realized between consciousnesses – by authority of the Other's recognition of me and my recognition of the Other. This recognition can be simultaneous and reciprocal: 'I know that the Other knows me as himself.' It produces actually and *in truth* the universality of self-consciousness. But the correct statement of the problem of Others renders this passage to the universal impossible. If the Other can in fact refer my 'self' to me, then at least at the end of the dialectical evolution there must be a common measure between what I am for him, what he is for me, what I am for myself, what he is for himself. Of course this homogeneity does not exist at the start; Hegel agrees to this. The relation 'Master-Slave' is not reciprocal. But Hegel affirms that the reciprocity must be capable of being established. Here at the outset he is creating a confusion – so easy that it seems voluntary – between *being-an-object* and *life*. The Other, he says, appears to me as an object. Now the object is *Myself* in the Other. When Hegel wants to define this object-state more exactly, he distinguishes in it three elements:

This self-apprehension by one in the other is: (1) The abstract moment of self-identity. (2) Each one, however, has also this particularity, that he manifests himself to the Other as an external object, as an immediately concrete and sensible existence. (3) Each one is absolutely for himself and individual as opposed to the other.⁵

We see that the abstract moment of self-identity is given in the knowledge of the Other. It is given with two other moments of the total structure.

But – a curious thing in a philosopher of Synthesis – Hegel did not ask if these three elements did not react on one another in such a way as to constitute a new form resistant to analysis. He defines his point of view in the *Phenomenology of Mind* when he declares that the Other appears first as non-essential (this is the sense of the third moment cited above) and as a ‘consciousness immersed in the being of life’. But here we are dealing with a pure co-existence of the abstract moment and of *life*. It is sufficient therefore that I or the Other risk our life in order that in the very act of offering oneself to danger, we realize the analytical separation of life and consciousness:

What the Other is for each consciousness, each consciousness is for the Other; each consciousness in turn accomplishes in itself by means of its own activity and by means of the activity of the Other, that pure abstraction of being for itself . . . To present oneself as a pure abstraction of self-consciousness is to reveal oneself as a pure negation of one’s objective form, to reveal oneself as not-bound to any determined existence . . . it is to reveal oneself as not-bound to life.⁶

Of course Hegel will say later that by the experience of risk and of the danger of death, self-consciousness learns that life is as essential to it as pure self-consciousness; but this is from a totally different point of view, and the fact still remains that I can always separate, in the Other, the pure *truth* of self-consciousness from his *life*. Thus the slave apprehends the self-consciousness of the master; he is its *truth* although, as we have seen, this truth is still not adequate.⁷

But is it the same thing to say that the Other on principle appears to me as an object and to say that he appears to me as bound to a particular existence, as immersed in *life*? If we remain on the level of pure, logical hypotheses, we shall note first that the Other can in fact be given to a consciousness in the form of an object without that object’s being precisely bound to that contingent object which we call a living body. *In fact* our experience presents us only with conscious, living individuals, but *in theory* it must be remarked that the Other is an object for me because he is the Other and not because he appears on the occasion of a body-object; otherwise we should fall back into the illusion of space which we discussed above. Thus what is essential to the Other qua Other is objectivity and not life. Moreover Hegel took this logical affirmation as his point of departure.

But if it is true that the connection between a consciousness and life does not distort the nature of the ‘abstract moment of self-consciousness’ which remains there, immersed, always capable of being discovered, is the case the same for objectivity? In other words, since we know that a consciousness *is* before being known, then is not a known consciousness

wholly modified by the very fact that it is known? Is 'to appear as an object for a consciousness' still 'to be consciousness'? It is easy to reply to this question: the very being of self-consciousness is such that in its being, its being is in question; this means that it is pure interiority. It is perpetually a reference to a *self* which it has to be. Its being is defined by this: that it *is* this being in the mode of being what is not and of not being what it is. Its being, therefore, is the radical exclusion of all objectivity. I am the one who cannot be an object for myself, the one who cannot even conceive for myself of existence in the form of an object (save on the plane of the reflective dissociation – but we have seen that reflection is the drama of the being who cannot be an object for himself). This is not because of the lack of detachment or because of an intellectual prejudice or of a limit imposed on my knowledge, but because objectivity demands an explicit negation: the object is what I make myself not-be, whereas I myself am what I make myself be. I pursue myself everywhere, I cannot escape myself; I reapprehend myself from behind. Even if I could attempt to make myself an object, I would already be myself at the heart of that object which I am; and at the very centre of that object I should have to be the subject who is looking at it. Moreover this is what Hegel hinted at when he said that the Other's existence is necessary in order for me to be an object for myself. But by holding that self-consciousness is expressed by the 'I am I' – i.e. by identifying it with self-knowledge – he failed to derive the consequences of his first affirmations; for he introduced into consciousness something like an object existing potentially to be disengaged without change by the Other. But if to be an object is precisely not-to-be-me, then the fact of being an object for a consciousness radically modifies consciousness not in what it is for itself but in its appearance to the Other. The Other's consciousness is what I can simply contemplate and what because of this fact appears to me as being a pure given instead of being what has to be me. It is what is released to me in universal time (i.e. in the original dispersion of moments) instead of appearing to me within the unity of its own temporalization. For the only consciousness which can appear to me in its own temporalization is *mine*, and it can do so only by renouncing all objectivity. In short the *for-itself* as for-itself cannot be known by the Other. The object which I apprehend under the name of the Other appears to me in a radically *other* form. The Other is not a *for-itself* as he appears to me; I do not appear to myself as I am *for-the-Other*. I am incapable of apprehending for myself the self which I am for the Other, just as I am incapable of apprehending on the basis of the *Other-as-object* which appears to me what the Other is for himself. How then could we establish a universal concept subsuming under the name of self-consciousness my *consciousness* for myself and (of) myself and my *knowledge* of the Other? But this is not all.

According to Hegel the Other is an object, and I apprehend myself as an object in the Other. But the one of these affirmations destroys the other. In order for me to be able to appear to myself as an object in the Other, I would have to apprehend the Other as subject; that is to apprehend him in his interiority. But in so far as the Other appears to me as object, my objectivity for him cannot appear to me. Of course I apprehend that the Other-as-object *refers to me* by means of intentions and acts, but due to the very fact that he is an object, the Other-as-a-mirror is clouded and no longer reflects anything. These intentions and these acts are things in the world and are apprehended in the Time of the World; they are established and contemplated; their meaning is an object for me. Thus I can only appear to myself as a transcendent quality to which the Other's acts and intentions refer; but since the Other's objectivity destroys my objectivity for him, it is as an internal subject that I apprehend myself as being that to which those intentions and those acts refer. It must be understood that this apprehension of myself by myself is in pure terms of consciousness, not of knowledge; by having to be what I am in form of an ecstatic self-consciousness, I apprehend the Other as an object pointing to me. Thus Hegel's optimism results in failure: between the Other-as-object and Me-as-subject there is no common measure, no more than between self-consciousness and consciousness *of* the Other. I cannot know myself *in* the Other if the Other is first an object for me; neither can I apprehend the Other in his true being – that is in his subjectivity. No universal knowledge can be derived from the relation of consciousnesses. This is what we shall call their ontological separation.

But there is in Hegel another and more fundamental form of optimism. This may be called an ontological optimism. For Hegel indeed truth is truth of the Whole. And he places himself at the vantage point of truth – i.e. of the Whole – to consider the problem of the Other. Thus when Hegelian monism considers the relation of consciousnesses, it does not put itself in any particular consciousness. Although the Whole is to be realized, it is already there as the truth of all which is true. Thus when Hegel writes that every consciousness, since it is identical with itself, is other than the Other, he has established himself in the whole, outside consciousnesses, and he considers them from the point of view of the Absolute. For individual consciousnesses are moments in the Whole, moments which by themselves are *unselbständig* and the Whole is a mediator between consciousnesses. Hence is derived an ontological optimism parallel to the epistemological optimism: plurality can and must be surpassed towards the totality. But if Hegel can assert the reality of this surpassing, it is because he has already given it to himself at the outset. In fact he has forgotten his own consciousness; he *is* the Whole, and consequently if he so easily resolves the problem of particular conscious-

nesses it is because for him there never has been any real problem in this connection. Actually he does not raise the question of the relation between his own consciousness and that of the Other. By effecting completely the abstraction of his own, he studies purely and simply the relation between the consciousnesses of others – i.e. the relation of consciousnesses which are already for him objects whose nature, according to him, is precisely that of being a particular type of object – the subject-object. These consciousnesses from the totalitarian point of view which he has adopted are strictly equivalent to each other, although each of them is separated from the rest by a particular privilege.

But if Hegel has forgotten himself, we cannot forget Hegel. This means that we are referred back to the *cogito*. In fact, if, as we have established, the being of my consciousness is strictly irreducible to knowledge, then I cannot transcend my being towards a reciprocal and universal relation in which I could see my being and that of others as equivalent. On the contrary, I must establish myself *in my being* and posit the problem of the Other in terms of my being. In a word the sole point of departure is the interiority of the *cogito*. We must understand by this that each one must be able by starting out from his own interiority to rediscover the Other's being as a transcendence which conditions the very being of that interiority. This of necessity implies that the multiplicity of consciousnesses is on principle unsurpassable, for I can undoubtedly transcend myself *towards* a Whole, but I cannot establish myself in this Whole so as to contemplate myself and to contemplate the Other. No logical or epistemological optimism can cover the scandal of the plurality of consciousnesses. If Hegel believed that it could, this is because he never grasped the nature of that particular dimension of being which is self-consciousness. The task which an ontology can lay down for itself is to describe this scandal and to found it in the very nature of being, but ontology is powerless to overcome it. It is possible – as we shall see better later – that we may be able to refute solipsism and show that the Other's existence is both evident and certain for us. But even if we could succeed in making the Other's existence share in the apodictic certainty of the *cogito* – i.e. of my own existence – we should not thereby 'surpass' the Other towards any inter-monad totality. So long as consciousnesses exist, the separation and conflict of consciousnesses will remain; we shall simply have discovered their foundation and their true terrain.

What has this long criticism accomplished for us? Simply this: if we are to refute solipsism, then my relation to the Other is first and fundamentally a relation of being to being, not of knowledge to knowledge. We have seen Husserl's failure when on this particular level he measures being by knowledge, and Hegel's when he identifies knowledge and being. But we have equally recognized that Hegel, although his vision is

obscured by the postulate of absolute idealism, has been able to put the discussion on its true plane.

In *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger seems to have profited by study of his predecessors and to have been deeply impressed with this twofold necessity: (1) the relation between 'human-realities' must be a relation of being; (2) this relation must cause 'human-realities' to depend on one another in their essential being. At least his theory fulfils these two requirements. In his abrupt, rather barbaric fashion of cutting Gordian knots rather than trying to untie them, he gives in answer to the question posited a pure and simple *definition*. He has discovered several moments – inseparable except by abstraction – in 'being-in-the-world', which characterizes human-reality. These moments are 'world', 'being-in' and 'being'. He has described the *world* as 'that by which human-reality makes known to itself what it is'; 'being-in' he has defined as *Befindlichkeit* and *Verstand*.⁸ We have still to speak of *being*; that is the mode in which human-reality is its being-in-the world. Being, Heidegger tells us, is the *Mit-Sein* – that is 'being-with'. Thus human-reality, the characteristic of being, is that human-reality is its being *with* others. This does not come about by chance. I do not exist *first* in order that subsequently a contingency should make me *encounter* the Other. The question here is of an essential structure of my being. But this structure is not established from outside and from a totalitarian point of view as it was with Hegel. To be sure, Heidegger does not take his departure from the *cogito* in the Cartesian sense of the discovery of consciousness by itself; but the human-reality which is revealed to him and for which he seeks to fix the structures in concepts is his own. 'Dasein ist je *meines*', he writes. It is by making explicit the pre-ontological comprehension which I have of myself that I apprehend being-with-others as an essential characteristic of my being. In short I discover the transcendental relation to the Other as constituting my own being, just as I have discovered that being-in-the-world measures my human-reality. Henceforth the problem of the Other is a false problem. The Other is no longer first a particular existence which I encounter in the world – and which could not be indispensable to my own existence, since I existed before encountering it. The Other is the ex-centric limit which contributes to the constitution of my being. He is the test of my being inasmuch as he throws me outside of myself towards structures which at once both escape me and define me; it is this test which originally reveals the Other to me.

Let us observe in addition that the type of connection with the Other has changed. With realism, idealism, Husserl, Hegel, the type of relation between consciousness was being-for; the Other appeared to me and even constituted me in so far as he was *for* me or I was *for* him. The problem was the mutual recognition of consciousnesses brought face to face which appeared *in the world* and which confronted each other. 'To-be-with' has

an altogether different meaning; 'with' does not intend the reciprocal relation of recognition and of conflict which would result from the appearance of a human-reality other than mine *in the midst of* the world. It expresses rather a sort of ontological solidarity for the exploitation of this world. The Other is not originally bound to me as an ontic reality appearing in the midst of the world among 'instruments' as a type of particular object; in that case he would be already degraded, and the relation uniting him to me could never take on reciprocity. The Other is not an *object*. In his connection with me he remains a human-reality; the being by which he determines me in my being is his pure being apprehended as 'being-in-the-world'. And we know that the 'in' must be understood in the sense of *colo*, *habito*, not of *insum*; to-be-in-the-world is to haunt the world, not to be ensnared in it; and it is in my 'being-in-the-world' that the Other determines me. Our relation is not a *frontal* opposition but rather an *oblique* interdependence. In so far as I make a world exist as a complex of instruments which I use for the ends of my human reality, I cause myself to be determined in my being by a being who makes the world exist as a complex of instruments for the ends of his reality. Moreover it is not necessary to understand this being-with as a pure concomitance which is passively received by my being. For Heidegger, to be is to be one's own possibilities; that is to make oneself be. It is then a mode of being which I make myself be. And it is very true that I am responsible for my being-for the Other in so far as I realize him freely in authenticity or in unauthenticity. It is in complete freedom and by an original choice that, for example, I realize my being-with in the anonymous form of 'they'. And if I am asked how my 'being-with' can exist for-myself, I must reply that through the world I make known to myself what I am. In particular when I am in the unauthentic mode of the 'they', the world refers to me a sort of impersonal reflection of my unauthentic possibilities in the form of instruments and complexes of instruments which belong to 'everybody' and which belong to me in so far as I am 'everybody': ready-made clothes, common means of transportation, parks, gardens, public places, shelters made for *anyone* who may take shelter there etc. Thus I make myself known as *anybody* by means of the indicative complex of instruments which indicate me as a *Worum-willen*. The unauthentic state – which is my ordinary state in so far as I have not realized my conversion to authenticity – reveals to me my 'being-with', not as the relation of one unique personality with other personalities equally unique, not as the mutual connection of 'most irreplaceable beings', but as a total interchangeability of the terms of the relation. The determination of the terms is still lacking; I am not opposed to the Other, for I am not 'me', instead we have the social unity of the *they*. To posit the problem on the level of the incommunicability of individual subject was to commit an *ὑστερον πρότερον*,⁹ to stand the

world on its head. Authenticity and individuality have to be earned: I shall be my own authenticity only if under the influence of the call of conscience (*Ruf des Gewissens*) I launch out towards death with a resolute-decision (*Entschlossenheit*) as towards my own most peculiar possibility. At this moment I reveal myself to myself in authenticity, and I raise others along with myself towards the authentic.

The empirical image which may best symbolize Heidegger's intuition is not that of a conflict but rather a crew. The original relation of the Other and my consciousness is not the *you* and *me*; it is the *we*. Heidegger's being-with is not the clear and distinct position of an individual confronting another individual; it is not *knowledge*. It is the mute existence in common with one member of the crew with his fellows, that existence which the rhythm of the oars or the regular movements of the coxswain will render sensible to the rowers and which *will be made manifest* to them by the common goal to be attained, the boat or the yacht to be overtaken, and the entire world (spectators, performance etc.) which is profiled on the horizon. It is on the common ground of this coexistence that the abrupt revelation of my 'being-unto-death' will suddenly make me stand out in an absolute 'common solitude' while at the same time it raises the others to that solitude.

This time we have indeed been given what we asked for: a being which in its own being implies the Other's being. And yet we cannot consider ourselves satisfied. First of all, Heidegger's theory offers us the indication of the solution to be found rather than that solution itself. Even if we should without reservation accept his substitution of 'being-with' for 'being-for', it would still remain for us a simple affirmation without foundation. Undoubtedly we shall encounter certain empirical states of our being – in particular that to which the Germans give the untranslatable name *Stimmung*¹⁰ – which seem to reveal a coexistence of consciousness rather than a relation of opposition. But it is precisely this coexistence which must be explained. Why does it become the unique foundation of our being? Why is it the fundamental type of our relation with others? Why did Heidegger believe that he was authorized to pass from this empirical and ontic establishment of being-with to a position claiming coexistence as the ontological structure of my 'being-in-the-world?' And what type of being does this coexistence have? To what extent is the negation which makes the Other *an other* and which constitutes him as non-essential maintained? If we suppress it entirely, are we not going to fall into a monism? And if we are to preserve it as an essential structure of the relation to the Other, then what modification must it undergo in order to lose the character of *opposition* which it had in being-for-others and acquire this character as a connection which creates solidarity and which is the very structure of being-with? And how shall we be able to pass from there to the concrete experience of the Other in the world, as

when from my window I see a man walking in the street? To be sure it is tempting to conceive of myself as standing out on the undifferentiated ground of the human by means of the impulse of my freedom, by the choice of my unique possibilities – and perhaps this conception holds an important element of truth. But in this form at least such a view gives rise to serious objections.

First of all, the ontological point of view joins here with the abstract view of the Kantian subject. To say that human reality (even if it is *my* human reality) 'is-with' by means of its ontological structure is to say that it is-with by nature – that is in an essential and universal capacity. Even if this affirmation were proved, it would not enable us to explain any concrete being-with. In other words, the ontological coexistence which appears as the structure of 'being-in-the-world' can in no way serve as a foundation to an ontic being-with, such as, for example, the coexistence which appears in my friendship with Pierre or in the couple which Annie and I make. In fact it would be necessary to show that 'being-with-Pierre' or 'being-with-Annie' is a structure constitutive of my concrete-being. But this is impossible from the point of view which Heidegger has adopted. The Other in the relation 'with', taken on the ontological level, cannot in fact be concretely determined any more than the directly confronted human-reality of which it is the alter ego; it is an abstract term and hence *unselbständig*, and it does not contain the power of becoming *that* Other – Pierre or Annie. Thus the relation of the *Mit-Sein* can be of absolutely no use to us in resolving the psychological, concrete problem of the recognition of the Other. There are two incommunicable levels and two problems which demand separate solutions.

It may be said that this is only one of the difficulties which Heidegger encounters in passing in general from the ontological level to the ontic level, in passing from 'being-in-the-world' in general to my relation with *this* particular instrument, in passing from my being-unto-death, which makes of my death my most essential possibility, to *this* 'ontic' death which I shall experience by encountering this or that external existent. But this difficulty can be disguised, if need be, in all other cases since, for example, it is human reality which causes the existence of a world in which a threat of death to human reality is hidden. Better yet, if the world *is*, it is because it is 'mortal' in the sense in which we say that a wound is mortal. But the impossibility of passing from one level to the other bursts forth when we meet the problem of the Other. In fact even if in the ecstatic upsurge of its being-in-the-world, human reality makes a world exist, one cannot, for all that, say that its being-with causes another human reality to rise up. Of course I am the being by whom 'there is' (*es gibt*) being. But are we to say that I am the being by whom 'there is' another human reality? If we understand by that that I am the being for whom there is *for me* another human reality, this is a pure and

simple truism. If we mean that I am the being by whom *there are* in general Others, we fall back into solipsism. In fact this human reality 'with whom' I am is itself 'in-the-world-with-me'; it is the free foundation of a world. (How does this make it *my* world? We cannot deduce from the being-with an identity of the worlds 'in which' the human realities are.) Human reality is its own possibilities. It is then for itself without having to wait for me to make its being exist in the form of the 'there is'. Thus I can constitute a world as 'mortal', but I cannot constitute a human-reality as a concrete being which is its own possibilities. My being-with, apprehended from the standpoint of 'my' being, can be considered only as a pure exigency founded in *my* being; it does not constitute the slightest proof of the Other's existence, not the slightest bridge between me and the Other.

More precisely, this ontological relation between me and an abstract Other, due to the very fact that it defines in general my relation to others, is far from facilitating a particular ontic relation between me and Pierre; in fact it renders impossible any concrete connection between my being and a particular Other given in my experience. If my relation with the Other is *a priori*, it thereby exhausts all possibility of relation with others. Empirical and contingent relations can be only the specifications of it, not particular cases. There can be specifications of a law only under two circumstances: either the law is derived inductively from empirical, particular facts, and that is not the case here; or else it is *a priori* and unifies experience, as the Kantian concepts do. Actually in this latter case, its scope is restricted to the limits of experience: I find in things only what I have put into them. Now the act of relating two concrete 'beings-in-the-world' cannot belong to *my* experience; and it therefore escapes from the domain of *being with*. But as the law precisely *constitutes* its own domain, it excludes *a priori* every real fact which it has not constructed. The existence of time as an *a priori* form of my sensibility would *a priori* exclude me from all connection with a noumenal time which had the characteristics of a being. Thus the existence of an ontological and hence *a priori* 'being-with' renders impossible all ontic connection with a concrete human-reality which would arise *for-itself* as an absolute transcendent. The 'being-with', conceived as a structure of my being, isolates me as surely as the arguments for solipsism.

The reason for this is that Heidegger's *transcendence* is a concept in bad faith: it aims, to be sure, at surpassing idealism, and it succeeds in so far as idealism presents us with a subjectivity at rest in itself and contemplating its own images. But the idealism thus surpassed is only a bastard form of idealism, a sort of empirical-critical psychologism. Undoubtedly Heidegger's human-reality 'exists outside itself'. But this existence outside itself is precisely Heidegger's definition of the *self*. It resembles neither the Platonic [Neo-Platonic?] ekstasis, where existence

is really alienation, existence in an Other, not Malebranche's vision in God, our own conception of the ekstasis and of the internal negation. Heidegger does not escape idealism; his flight outside the self, as an *a priori* structure of his being, isolates him as surely as the Kantian reflection on the *a priori* conditions of our experience. In fact what human-reality rediscovers at the inaccessible limit of this flight outside itself is still the self: the flight outside the self is a flight towards the self, and the world appears as the pure distance between the self and the self.

Consequently it would be in vain to look in *Sein und Zeit* for a simultaneous surpassing of all idealism and of all realism. Heidegger's attempt to bring human-reality out of its solitude raises those same difficulties which idealism generally encounters when it tries to found the existence of concrete beings which are similar to us and which as such escape our experience, which even as they are being constituted do not arise from our *a priori*. He seems to escape isolation because he takes the 'outside of self' sometimes as being 'outside-of-self-towards-self' and sometimes as 'outside-self-in-others'. But the second interpretation of 'outside-of-self', which Heidegger surreptitiously slides in through his devious reasoning, is strictly incompatible with the first. Human-reality at the very heart of its ekstases remains alone. It is here that we can derive a new and valid insight as the result of our critical examination of Heidegger's teaching: human-reality remains alone because the Other's existence has the nature of a contingent and irreducible fact. We *encounter* the Other; we do not constitute him. And if this fact still appears to us in the form of a necessity, yet it does not belong with those 'conditions of the possibility of our experience' or – if you prefer – with ontological necessity. If the Other's existence is a necessity, it is a 'contingent necessity', that is it is of the same type as the factual necessity which is imposed on the *cogito*. If the Other is to be capable of being given to us, it is by means of a direct apprehension which leaves to the encounter its character as facticity, just as the *cogito* itself leaves all its facticity to my own thought, a facticity which nevertheless shares in the apodicticity of the *cogito* itself – i.e. in its indubitability.

This long exposition of doctrine will not therefore have been useless if it enables us to formulate the necessary and sufficient conditions under which a theory of the existence of others can be valid.

(1) Such a theory cannot offer a new *proof* of the existence of others, or an argument better than any other against solipsism. Actually if solipsism is to be rejected, this cannot be because it is impossible or, if you prefer, because nobody is truly solipsistic. The Other's existence will always be subject to doubt, at least if one doubts the Other only in words and abstractly, in the same way that without really being able to conceive of it, I can write, 'I doubt my own existence.' In short the Other's existence cannot be a *probability*. Probability can concern only objects

which appear in our experience and from which new effects can appear in our experience. There is probability only if a validation or invalidation of it is at every moment possible. Thus since the Other on principle and in its 'For-itself' is outside my experience, the probability of his existence as *Another Self* can never be either validated or invalidated; it can be neither believed nor disbelieved; it cannot even be measured; it loses therefore its very being as probability and becomes a pure fictional conjecture. In the same way M. Lalande¹¹ has effectively shown that an hypothesis concerning the existence of living beings on the planet Mars will remain purely conjectural with no chance of being either true or false so long as we do not have at our disposal instruments or scientific theories enabling us to produce facts validating or invalidating this hypothesis. But the structure of the Other is on principle such that no new experiment will ever be able to be conceived, that no new theory will come to validate or invalidate the hypothesis of his existence, that no instrument will come to reveal new facts inspiring me to affirm or to reject this hypothesis. Therefore if the Other is not immediately present to me, and if his existence is not as sure as my own, all conjecture concerning him is entirely lacking in meaning. But if I do not conjecture about the Other, then, precisely, I affirm him. A theory of the Other's existence must therefore simply question me in my being, must make clear and precise the meaning of that affirmation; in particular, far from inventing a proof, it must make explicit the very foundation of that certainty. In other words Descartes had not *proved* his existence. Actually I have always known that I existed: I have never ceased to practise the *cogito*. Similarly my resistance to solipsism – which is as lively as any I should offer to an attempt to doubt the *cogito* – proves that I have always known that the Other existed, that I have always had a total though implicit *comprehension* of his existence, that this 'pre-ontological' comprehension comprises a surer and deeper understanding of the nature of the Other and the relation of his being to my being than all the theories which have been built around it. If the Other's existence is not a vain conjecture, a pure fiction, this is because there is a sort of *cogito* concerning it. It is this *cogito* which we must bring to light by specifying its structures and determining its scope and its laws.

(2) On the other hand, Hegel's failure has shown us that the only point of departure possible is the Cartesian *cogito*. Moreover the *cogito* alone establishes us on the ground of that factual necessity which is the necessity of the Other's existence. Thus what for lack of a better term we called *cogito* of the Other's existence is merged with my own *cogito*. The *cogito*, examined once again, must throw me outside it and on to the Other, just as it threw me outside upon the In-itself; and this must be done not by revealing to me an *a priori* structure of myself which would point towards an equally *a priori* Other but by disclosing to me the concrete, indubitable

presence of a particular, concrete Other, just as it has already revealed to me my own incomparable, contingent but necessary, and concrete existence. Thus we must ask the For-itself to deliver to us the For-others; we must ask absolute immanence to throw us into absolute transcendence. In my own inmost depths I must find not *reasons for believing* that the Other exists but the Other himself as not being me.

(3) What the *cogito* must reveal to us is not the-Other-as-object. For a long time now it must have been obvious that what is called an *object* is said to be *probable*. If the Other is an object for me, he refers me to probability. But probability is founded solely on the infinite congruity of our representations. Since the Other is neither a representation nor a system of representations nor a necessary unity of our representations, he cannot be probable: he cannot *at first* be an object. Therefore, if he is *for us*, this can be neither as a constitutive factor of our knowledge of the world nor as a constitutive factor of our knowledge of the self, but as one who 'interests' our being, and that not as he contributes *a priori* to constitute our being but as he interests it concretely and 'ontically' in the empirical circumstances of our facticity.

(4) If we attempt somehow regarding the Other what Descartes attempted to do for God with that extraordinary 'proof by the idea of perfection' which is wholly animated by the intuition of transcendence, then for our apprehension of the Other qua Other we are compelled to reject a certain type of negation which we have called an external negation. The Other must appear to the *cogito* as *not being* me. This negation can be conceived in two ways: either it is a pure, external negation, and it will separate the Other from myself as one substance from another substance – and in this case all apprehension of the Other is by definition impossible; or else it will be an internal negation, which means a synthetic, active connection of the two terms, each one of which constitutes itself by denying that it is the other. This negative relation will therefore be reciprocal and will possess a twofold interiority: this means first that the multiplicity of 'Others' will not be a *collection* but a *totality* (in this sense we admit that Hegel is right), since each Other finds his being in the Other.¹² It also means that this totality is such that it is on principle impossible for us to adopt 'the point of view of the whole'. In fact we have seen that no abstract concept of consciousness can result from the comparison of my being-for-myself with my object-state for the Other. Furthermore this totality – like that of the For-itself – is a detotalized totality; for since existence-for-others is a radical refusal of the Other, no totalitarian and unifying synthesis of 'Others' is possible.

It is in the light of these few observations that we in turn shall now attack the question of the Other.

Notes

1. 'La Transcendance de l'Ego', *Recherches philosophiques* 1937.
2. *Phénoménologie de l'Esprit*, p. 148. Edition Cosson.
3. *Propedeutik*, p. 20, first edition of the complete works.
4. *Propedeutik*, p. 20, first edition of the complete works.
5. *ibid.*, p. 18.
6. *Phenomenology of Mind*.
7. *ibid.*
8. Roughly, *Befindlichkeit* is 'finitude' and *Verstand* 'comprehension'. Tr.
9. Correction for ὅσπερον πρόσηρον, obviously a misprint. Tr.
10. Literally 'pitch' or 'tuning'. Perhaps the nearest English equivalent is 'sympathy' in its original Greek sense of feeling or experiencing *with* someone. Tr.
11. *Les théories de l'induction et de l'expérimentation*.
12. *Chaque autrui trouve son être en l'autre*.

Speech and writing according to Hegel (1971)

Jacques Derrida

Introduction to Hegel's semiology

Since real difference belongs to the extremes, this mean (*Mitte*) is but an abstract neutrality, their real possibility, the as it were theoretical element of the existence, process, and results of chemical objects. In the corporeal element water has this function of being medium; in the spiritual element, in so far as there is an analogon of such a relationship in it, we must seek this function on the side of signs in general, and more precisely (*näher*) in language.

(*Science of Logic*)

What must be understood here by 'mean'? By 'semiological medium'? And more precisely (*näher*) – more closely, more narrowly – by 'linguistic medium'? We shall here be interested in the difference of this narrowing, discovering on the way nothing else than a narrowing of difference: another name for the medium of the spirit.

In the *Encyclopaedia* (§458) Hegel regrets that in general 'signs and language are introduced as an appendix in psychology, or even in logic, without any reflection on their necessity and their enchainment in the system of the activity of the understanding'.

For the moment let us see here the indication or the incitation to recognize that the essential place of semiology is at the centre, not on the margin or as an appendix to Logic.

In determining Being as presence (presence of the present being [*étant-présent*] in the form of an object, or self-presence of the present being in the form of self-consciousness), metaphysics could only consider the *sign* as a passage, a place of passage, a passage-way [*passerelle*] between two moments of presence, the provisional reference from one presence

to the other. The passage-way can be *lifted*. The sign procedure, the process of signification, has a history; it is history comprehended: comprehended between a primordial presence and its reappropriation in a final presence, in the self-presence that would have been separated from itself only during the time of a detour, the time of the sign. The time of the sign is then the time of reference; and time itself is but the referring of presence to itself. As such signification, the sign procedure is, to be sure, the moment of presence lost; but it is a presence lost by the very time that engages it in the movement of its reappropriation.

The sign can then, in metaphysics, become an object – the object of a *theory*. That is it can be considered, regarded *on the basis* of what is given to be seen in intuition, viz. the present being. The theory of signs arises from present being, but also, and thereby, in view of the present being, in view of presence. The ‘in view’ designates the theoretical pre-eminence of the gaze, as well as the authority of the final aim, the *telos* of reappropriation of full presence, the ordination of the theory of signs to the light of parousia. The theory of signs, already inasmuch as it is a theory, though it be given out to be scientific or positive, is, from this *point of view*, metaphysical in essence; it is historically metaphysical inasmuch as the concept, and consequently the whole theory, of signs remains commanded by an archaeology, an eschatology and a teleology ordained to presence, or to presentation of present being.

It could be shown that this very general necessity governs metaphysics in its essence and in its totality – which is one with its history, and, I would even go so far as to say: with history as such.

We should then expect Hegelianism, which is so generally said to represent the *completion* of metaphysics, both in the sense of accomplishment and in the sense of end, to give the most systematic and powerful, the most ingathered, ingathering, assembled, assembling form to this metaphysical gesture. We should find a primary index of this in an architectonic reading that aims to locate the place Hegel assigns to the theory of signs in the system. For such an architectonic reading it would doubtless be best to consult here the *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences* (1817).

I Semiology and psychology

The theory of signs is inscribed in the third part of the *Encyclopaedia*, that is in the *Philosophy of Mind*, following the *Science of Logic* (*Lesser Logic*) and the *Philosophy of Nature*. What does this division answer to? To briefly collect its meaning it is enough that we refer to what Hegel himself says at the end of the Introduction to the *Encyclopaedia*, §18:

As the whole science, and only the whole, can exhibit what the Idea or system of reason is, it is impossible to give in a preliminary way (*vorläufige Vorstellung*: precursory) a general impression of a philosophy. Nor can a division (*Einstellung*: distribution) of philosophy into its parts be intelligible, except in connection with the system. A preliminary division, like the limited conception from which it comes, can only be an anticipation (something anticipated). Here, however, it is premised that the Idea turns out to be (*sich erweist*) the thought which is completely (*schlechthin*: simply) identical with itself, and not identical simply in the abstract, but also in its action of setting itself over against itself, so as to gain a being of its own, and yet a being in full possession of itself while it is in this other (*und in diesem Anderen nur bei sich selbst zu sein*). Thus philosophy is subdivided in three parts:

1. Logic, the science of the Idea in and for itself.
2. The Philosophy of Nature, the science of the Idea in its otherness. [Nature is thus the Idea inasmuch as it has left itself and opposed itself to itself.]
3. The Philosophy of Mind, the science of the Idea come back to itself out of that otherness.

All this is, of course, a movement, and Hegel makes clear that this kind of dividing would be abusive if it decomposed and juxtaposed these three parts, substantializing their differences.

The theory of signs belongs, then, to the third part, the Philosophy of Mind, the science of that moment in which the Idea returns to itself after having so to speak lost consciousness, lost the consciousness and meaning of itself in nature. The sign would then be a moment or an essential structure of the Idea's return to self-presence, returning to itself in Mind. Mind is the Idea's being with itself. We can then already assign to signs the absolutely general determination of being a form or a movement of the Idea's relation to itself in Mind, a mode of the absolute's being with itself.

Let us narrow our focus, and situate with more precision the theory of signs within the Philosophy of Mind. The Philosophy of Mind is itself articulated into three parts, corresponding to the three movements of the development of Mind:

1. The Mind Subjective: the self-relation, and the ideal totality of the Idea. Being with itself in inward freedom.
2. The Mind Objective: in the form of a world to be produced and to be produced no longer in the form of ideality, but of reality. Freedom now becomes existent, present necessity (*vorhandene Notwendigkeit*).
3. The Mind Absolute: the existent unity of Mind as objectivity and of

Mind as ideality and concept, which essentially and actually is in and for itself and for ever reproduces itself: Mind in its absolute truth.

The first two moments are finite and transitory determinations of Mind. The theory of signs belongs to the science of one of these finite determinations, that of the Mind Subjective. If we consider that 'the finite *is not*, i.e. is not the truth, but merely a transition (*Übergehen*) and an emergence to something higher (*Übersichhinausgehen*)' (386), then we can determine signs – which are part of a finite determination of Mind – to be a mode or finite determination of Mind Subjective taken as mediation or self-surpassing; the sign is a transition within transition, a transition of transition. But it is the transition of the departure from itself that is the route unto itself (*nosto*). This transition is, of course, thought in the movement of the true, under the authority of the dialectic, and is supervised (so to speak) by the concepts of *Aufhebung* and negativity. 'This finitude . . . is the dialectic that makes a thing have its cessation (*Vergehen*) by and in another.'

But let us state yet more precisely the site of Hegel's semiology. The Mind Subjective itself is

1. In itself, or immediate: this is the soul or the Spirit in nature (*Naturgeist*), the object of Anthropology, which in fact studies man in nature.
2. For itself, or mediate, as identical reflection in itself and in other things. This is Mind in relation or particularization (*Besonderung*): consciousness – the object treated by Phenomenology of Mind.
3. Mind determining itself in itself, as a subject for itself. This is the object treated by Psychology.

The theory of signs belongs precisely to psychology, defined as the science of Mind determining itself in itself as a subject for itself. Let us in passing notice (though this is most significant) that semiology, as a part of the science of the subject for itself, does not thereby belong to the science of consciousness, i.e. to phenomenology. I point out how profoundly traditional is this gesture or this topic inscribing semiology in a non-'natural' science of the soul, a psychology. We are thereby not only referred to all the semiological endeavours of the eighteenth century, which are all psychologies, but finally to Aristotle, the patron Hegel invokes for his Philosophy of Mind when, in the Introduction, he writes, speaking of psychology:

The books of Aristotle *On the Soul* (*Peri Psychēs*) . . . are for this reason still by far the most admirable, perhaps even the sole, work of speculative value on this topic. The main aim of a philosophy of mind can only be to reintroduce the concept into the knowledge of mind, and so rediscover the lesson of those Aristotelian books.

But Aristotle is precisely he who has inscribed his theory of the voice in a treatise *Peri Psychēs* (this will be important for us later), and in his *Peri Hermeneias* has defined signs, symbols, speech and writing on the basis of the *pathemata tes psychēs* – states, affections or passions of the soul. You know well that text that opens the *Peri Hermeneias*:

Spoken words (*ta en tē phonē*) are the symbols of the affections of the soul, and written words are the symbols of spoken words. Just as all men have not the same writing, so all men have not the same speech sounds, but the states of the soul, of which these expressions are the immediate signs (*semeia protos*: the primary signs) are the same for all [which precisely permits making a science of them], as also are those things of which these states are the images. This matter has, however, been discussed in my treatise about the soul.

When I say that it is traditional to make semiology dependent on psychology, I do not think only of Hegelianism in the past, but also of what often gives itself out as being beyond Hegelianism, and even as a Hegelianism surpassed. For this tradition, properly metaphysical and thus extending from Aristotle to Hegel, will not be interrupted by the venerable (venerated) initiator of the modern project of the general semiology that serves as the paradigm or model for so many ‘modern’ and ‘human’ ‘sciences’. You know that at least twice in his *Course in General Linguistics* de Saussure makes his plan for a general semiology juridically dependent on psychology.

Everything in language is basically psychological, including its material and mechanical manifestations, such as sound changes; and since linguistics provides social psychology with such valuable data, is it not part and parcel of this discipline? (p. 6–7) *A science that studies the life of signs within society* is conceivable; it would be a part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology; I shall call it semiology (from Greek semeion ‘sign’). Semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws govern them. Since the science does not yet exist, no one can say what it would be; but it has a right to existence, a place staked out in advance. Linguistics is only a part of the general science of semiology; the laws discovered by semiology will be applicable to linguistics, and the latter will circumscribe a well-defined area within the mass of anthropological facts.

To determine the exact place of semiology is the task of the psychologist.

It is from our point of view noteworthy that it was the same linguist or glossematician, Hjelmslev, who, while recognizing the importance of the

Saussurian heritage, cast into question, as the uncritical presuppositions of the Saussurian science, at the same time the authority recognized to psychology and the privilege accorded to the sonorous or phonic 'expressive substance'. We shall see how the psychic excellence and the phonic pre-eminence go together in Hegel also, for reasons that are essential and are historically metaphysical.

We return to Hegel: what does the inscription of semiology in speculative psychology mean for him? It means first very generally that signs are here considered according to the structure and movement of the *Aufhebung* by which mind, rising above nature, suppressing and retaining it, sublimating it in itself, is accomplished as inward freedom, and thus is presented to itself *as such*: 'Psychology', says Hegel, 'studies the faculties or general modes of mental activity qua mental – intuition, representation, remembering etc., desires etc.' As in the *De Anima* (432 ab) Hegel in several places refuses every real separation between the faculties of the soul (cf. §445). In view of this attention to not substantially separate the psychic faculties and structures, but rather to determine their mediations, articulations, joinings, which constitute the unity of the movement, it is noteworthy that the theory of signs, essentially consisting in a theory of speech and writing, is contained in two long Remarks, much longer than the paragraphs to which they are attached, in the subchapter entitled 'Imagination'. Semiology is then a development in the theory of imagination, and more precisely, as we will see, in a Phantasiology or Phantastics.

What is imagination? Representation (*Vorstellung*) is intuition remembered-interiorized (*erinnerte*). It pertains to intelligence (*Intelligenz*), which consists in interiorizing sensible immediacy, 'to posit itself as possessing the intuition of itself' (*in sich selbst anschauend zu setzen*) – to lift and conserve, in the twofold movement of *Aufhebung*, the subjectivity belonging to interiority, to be exteriorized in itself and 'be in itself in its own exteriority' (*in ihrer eigenen Äusserlichkeit in sich zu sein*). *Erinnerung* is a decisive moment or movement in this movement of representation by which intelligence is *recalled* to itself, and is in itself in its own exteriority. In it the content of intuition becomes an image – that is, is freed from immediacy and individuality so as to allow transition to objective conceptual representation. And the image that thus is *erinnert* – interiorized in memory – is no longer an 'existence', that is present, there, but stored up out of consciousness (*bewusstlos aufbewahrt*), retained in an unconscious abode. Intelligence can then be conceived as this reserve, this very dark cover at the bottom of which the buried images are to be sought. It is, Hegel says, a 'nocturnal pit' (*nächtliche Schacht*) or, further, an unconscious pit (*bewusstlose Schacht*).

We shall now follow in the Hegelian text the route that goes from this pit of night, silent as death but also reverberant as all the powers of

voice it holds in reserve – the route that from this pit of night which is also a pit of voice and truth leads us to a certain pyramid brought back from Egyptian deserts which will soon rise on the sober and abstract fabric of the Hegelian text to fix there the stature and status of the sign. That the route here is circular and that the pit is a pyramid is the enigma about which we must ask if it is to be brought up like a truth from the bottom of the pit or deciphered as an inscription on the front of the monument.

The intelligence that is in possession of this reservoir (*Vorrat*), this pit, can then draw from it and bring to light, produce, 'exteriorize its possession (*Eigentum*) without having any further need of exterior intuition for it to exist'. 'This synthesis of the internal image with the recollected existence is *representation* proper: by this synthesis the internal now has the qualification of being able to be presented (to be held) before intelligence and have its existence, its *Dasein*, in it' (§454).

This movement is the movement of the *reproductive imagination* (*reproduktive Einbildungskraft*). The 'source' of images is here 'the interiority belonging to the ego, which is now the power over them'. Having thus this reserve of images at its disposal, intelligence, operating by subsumption, is reproduced in itself, recalled, interiorized (*erinnert*), and is thereby produced as fancy, symbolizing, allegorizing or poetizing (*dichtende*) imagination. But if there is here only question of the re-productive imagination, this is because all these formations, these *Gebilde*, remain syntheses working over intuitive, receptive data, passively received from the exterior, met with, found (*gefunden*), given (*gegeben*) in intuition. This imagination, this *Einbildungskraft*, then does not produce, does not form, does not imagine its own *Gebilde*.

But – seemingly paradoxically – inasmuch as this imaginative re-production is not a production, inasmuch as it receives the content of what it forms, inasmuch as it does not produce *sponte sua* an existence or a thing, it still remains shut up within itself. The self-identity of intelligence has been recovered, but in subjective unilaterality. The seeming paradox is then due to the fact that intelligence remains subjective, internal, because it has to passively receive a *gefunden*, a given met with an intuition. It is still an affection.

This moment will be lifted in productive imagination, productive fancy, where the intuition of self, the immediate relation with oneself, such as it was given in re-productive imagination, becomes an *existent*, is exteriorized, is produced in the world as an existent or a thing. This thing is the *sign*. And this movement is the movement of productive fancy, the sign-making fancy (*Zeichen machende Phantasie*). Imagination forms signs in, as always, proceeding outside of itself.

I shall translate §457, which brings us from reproduction without signs to the production of signs:

In fancy intelligence is accomplished (*vollendet*) in view of intuition of itself (*zur Selbstanschauung*) inasmuch as the content gathered in itself has an imaged existence (*Existenz*). But this formation of the intuition of itself is subjective; it still lacks the moment of being. But in this unity of internal content and matter (*Stoffes*), intelligence has therein *implicitly* returned both to identical self-relation and to immediacy. As reason, its first start was to appropriate to itself (*anzueignen*) the immediate datum in itself, i.e. to universalize it; and now its action as reason is from the present point directed towards giving the character of an existent (*als seiendes zu bestimmen*) to what in it has been perfected to concrete auto-intuition. In other words, it aims at making itself *be* (*Sein*) and be a thing (*Sache*). Acting on this view, it is self-exteriorizing (*ist sie sich äussernd*, intuition-producing (*Anschauung produzierend*): the imagination which creates signs (*Zeichen machende Phantasie*).

Let us first notice that the production most creative of signs is here determined as a simple exteriorization, that is fundamentally as *expression*, setting without of what is within, with all that can command the classic nature of this concept. Let us notice, second, that this sign-producing imagination nevertheless does nothing less than *produce intuitions* – an affirmation that may appear abusive or unintelligible, since here it is a creating of what is given to be seen. Imagination here has a site or a status analogous to Kant's transcendental imagination, which also, as an 'art hidden in the depths of the soul', is an intermediary schema between the sensibility and the understanding, and comprises their respective and contradictory predicates, receptive passivity and productive spontaneity. Finally let us notice that the transcendental imagination is also the movement of temporalization which Heidegger has so admirably repeated in his *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*; this will later be important for us. We shall soon see what time *signifies*, how it signifies, that is how it constitutes the process of signification.

The concept of sign, both production and intuition, will then be marked by the scandal of this contradiction; all the oppositions of concepts will be gathered, summed up, sunken in it – and in such a way that all contradictions will seem to be resolved into it. But at the same time what is thereby betokened in the name sign already appears irreducible to all the formal oppositions between concepts, since it welcomes them simultaneously, admitting in itself both the interior and the exterior, the spontaneous and the receptive, the intelligible and the sensible, the same and the other etc. The sign is thus also the sign of the following question – it signifies the following question: is this contradiction dialecticity itself, or is the dialectic the resolution of the sign in the horizon of the non-sign? We see that the question of the sign quickly merges with the

question what is dialectics? or better with the question: can the question of the sign or the question of dialectics be put in the form 'What . . . ?'? I cover over again this distant and underlying horizon to return to the turn of our text.

Immediately upon naming the sign-making fancy, Hegel states that fantastic unity of opposites that are constituted in semio-poetics. This fantastic emission of signs, this semio-poetics, is a *Mittelpunkt*, that is both a central point towards which all the rays of opposites converge, a mid-point, the milieu in the sense of the element, the medium, and the mean point, the point of transition of opposites into one another. 'Productive imagination is the *Mittelpunkt* in which the universal and being, one's own (*eigen*) and what is picked up (*Gefundensein*), the internal and external, are completely welded into one (*volkommen in eins geschaffen sind*).'

But (and this is my last point here before broaching this semiology for itself) Hegel, who at first sight seems to place no limits on the extension of the theory of signs, none the less immediately reduces its import and reinscribes it in the movement and structure of a dialectic that encompasses it. The moment of the sign is as it were *provisory*, a *provisory deposit*. This limit is the limit of abstract *formality*. The semiotic moment is a formal moment. And for this reason it remains exterior, inferior, and prior to the moment of content and truth. Taken for itself the sign is only *in view of truth*. Only truth can give it content:

The formations of fancy are on all hands recognized as such combinations of the mind's own and inward with the matter of intuition; what further and more definite aspects they have is a matter for other departments. For the present this internal studio (*innere Werkstätte*) of intelligence is only to be looked at in these abstract aspects. Imagination, when regarded as the agency of this unification, is reason (*Vernunft*), but only a *formal* reason, because the matter or theme it embodies is to imagination qua imagination a matter of indifference; whilst reason qua reason also determines the content in view of *truth* (*zur Wahrheit*).

(§457)

We must, then, emphasize the progress represented by this semiology which, despite the formal limit assigned to the sign, ceases to make of the sign a reject or an empirical accident, but on the contrary a moment, however abstract, of the development of rationality in view of truth. Yet, having stressed this, we must then ask why truth (the presence of being, here in the form of self-presence) is announced in the absence of signs. Why is the metaphysical concept of truth (and there is no other) bound up with a concept of signs, and yet can determine the sign only as a *lack*

of full truth? And why – if we consider Hegelianism to be the ultimate assembling of metaphysics and the historically most systematic opening up of the question of signs – why does metaphysics necessarily determine the sign as a progression in view of truth – where ‘in view’ means: thought in its destination from the truth towards which it is orientated; but also means: remaining in the view of truth (as we say to express distance and divergence in the process of navigation); and, finally, ‘in view’ means being the means of manifestation with regard to truth (fancy (*phantasia*) having the same root as phenomenon (*phaō*, *phainesthai*), the brilliance of the appearing that provides for seeing). We ask why the phantastics of signs is so related to the phenomenon as the presentation of the truth of beings; why sign and truth are so related.

But this ‘Why’ can no longer be understood as a ‘What does that signify?’ and still less as a ‘What does that mean to say?’ For the question thus understood would still be commanded by what is in question, signification and meaning [*vouloir-dire*]. Our ultimate question, our ultimate why, is then not to be resolved into a ‘What does signification signify?’ or ‘What does meaning mean?’ We must question at the point and in the form where signification no longer signifies, and where meaning no longer means to say anything – not that they would be absurd in the sense of their system and within it, that is within metaphysics, but because the question will have taken us beyond the closure of this system, to the outer limits of metaphysics – if such an operation is still possible in our language. Then ‘Why’ [*Pourquoi*] here no longer indicates a question about the in-view-of-what? [*pour quoi*], about the *telos* or the *eschaton* of the movement of signification; nor does it indicate a question about an origin: ‘Why?’ taken as ‘because of what?’ ‘Starting with what?’ etc. ‘Why’ is then the still metaphysical name for a question about the metaphysical system that links the sign to the concept and to truth. But this question can break through and penetrate only in freeing itself from even this Why-form, undetermined as it may seem. In any case, whatever be not the response but the trajectory, the plot of such a break-through, we *know* already – and this is a knowing (scientific, historical, metaphysical knowing: here the distinction between these regions is not pertinent) – we know already that the concept of sign, whatever be the problematic renewal to which modernity subjects it, whatever be the positive, fecund and necessary scientific progress of semiology or linguistics (and we know that today it is considerable), we know that the concept of sign, wherever it is at work, and especially where it determines the field and object of a science – the concept of sign detains all this positivity, all this science, all these acquisitions in the metaphysical closure. This does not prevent this closure from being solicited by certain movements of this scientific and intra-metaphysical labour. But in this labour everything that still

requires the sign 'sign' is, in this aspect and in this measure, metaphysical in essence.

II Hegel's semiology

The sign, then, is in Hegel's definition the unity of an 'independent representation' and an 'intuition'. But Hegel must immediately introduce a sort of divergence, of difference, which will divide intuition, opening forth the space of signification and the play of the sign. For in the signifying unity, in the identity of representation and intuition, something exceptional takes place: this intuition is not a simple intuition, like all others. As in all intuition, a being is given, a thing is presented, given to be immediately received in its presence. For example, says Hegel, the colour of a cockade is there, present, immediate, given to intuition. But inasmuch as it is united to representation (*Vorstellung*) this presence represents, that is represents something other than itself. It is put in place of something else (*etwas anderes vorstellend*), a representational representative of something else (here *Vorstellung* has all the meanings of 'representative'). What represents? Of what is the signifier thus presented to intuition a signifier? How does Hegel determine the represented or the signified? It is clearly an ideality contrasted with the real corporeality of the signifier. Hegel calls this represented of the *Vorstellung*, this signified of the sign, the *Bedeutung* (generally translated by 'signification'; I, however, prefer to translate it by 'meaning-content' [*contenu de vouloir-dire*]). It will be seen that this translation is also fitting here for a soul (*Seele*). A soul deposited in what? In a body, of course; in the body of the signifier. The sign, unity of the signifying body and the signified ideality, is then defined as an incarnation. The opposition of soul and body, intelligible and sensible, is then, with all the concepts this opposition implicates, what continues and will continue to determine the difference between the signified and the signifier, the signifying intention, an animating intention, and the inert body of the signifier. This will be true in de Saussure: it will be true in Husserl, for whom the body of the sign is animated by the intention of significations as a body (*Körper*) becoming own-body (*Leib*) animated by *Geist*. And Husserl will say that the living word is a *leibliche Geistigkeit*.

In Hegel, however, the body of the signifier is not only an own-body [*corps propre*]: it does not only become 'own' in being animated by the signifying intention. Or rather it becomes own and animated only while simultaneously being constituted as a *tomb*. The *sōma/sēma* association is also at work in the Hegelian text, and this is not surprising.¹

What does it mean to say that the body of the sign is a tomb? The body as a tomb is at the same time the body's life as a sign of death,

the body as other than the soul, the animated *psychē*, the living breath. But the tomb is also what shelters, holds in reserve, treasures up life, enables life to withstand duration, marks the soul and shelters it from death. The tomb is thus what *warns* the soul of possible death and warns of the death of the soul, averts death. This twofold warning function constitutes the status of the funerary monument. The body of the sign is that monument in which the soul will be shut up, guarded, maintained, held in maintenance, present. The soul is and keeps itself alive in this monument, but it has need of the monument only because it is somehow dying, it at least risks death, is exposed to death in its vital relation with its own body. Death must indeed be at work – and who better than Hegel has been able to describe the work of death? – for something like a monument to come to retain and protect the life of the soul.

The sign as a monument of life and death, a tomb preserving intact the life of the soul or the embalmed own body entrusted to it, the monument preserving the hegemony of the soul and withstanding the wear of centuries, the monument signifying like a text of stones covered with inscriptions – is the pyramid.

And the fact that Hegel uses the word 'pyramid' to designate the sign, that he uses this sign, this symbol, or this allegory to signify the sign, that the sign's signifier here is the pyramid, this fact will be important for us. Not only because of the meanings denoted I have just recalled, but also for the meanings connoted, which we could decipher over and beyond Hegel's express intention. In particular, to designate the sign in general there is the reference to a silent writing and to Egyptian hieroglyphics, in which Hegel will later see a kind of resistance to the movement of dialectics and history.

But let us first read the few lines in which suddenly Egypt is inscribed and plants its pyramid in Hegel's text:

In this unity (initiated by Intelligence) of an independent representation with an intuition, the matter of the latter is, in the first instance, something accepted, immediate, or given (*ein Aufgenommenes*: given in affection or sensibility) (for example, the colour of the cockade etc.). But in this fusion of the two elements, the intuition does not count positively or as representing itself, but as representative of something else. [Thus, for once, we have a sort of intuition of absence.] It is an image, which has received in itself (*in sich empfangen hat*: received, welcomed, conceived in the sense a woman conceives by receiving) as its soul (*als Seele*) and signification (*seine Bedeutung*) a representation independent of Intelligence. *Diese Anschauung ist das Zeichen*: This intuition is the Sign.

Let us now move to the remark that follows, one of those two remarks that contain the whole theory of signs (although Hegel later criticizes those who reduce semiology to the place and importance of an appendix). 'The sign is some immediate intuition, representing a totally different import from what naturally belongs to it (*die einen ganz anderen Inhalt vorstellt, als den sie für sich hat*).' Notice here that *vorstellen* – generally translated by 'represent', but in the sense of 'positing before', placing in view, object-representation – here has also the sense of representational detour, recourse to a representative, put in the place of the other, delegate for the other and reference to the other. An intuition is here delegated, commissioned, to represent something else, a 'totally different content'. 'The sign is some immediate intuition, representing a totally different import from what naturally belongs to it; it is the pyramid into which a foreign soul (*eine fremde Seele*) has been conveyed (*ist versetzt*: transposed, transplanted, transferred; *im Leihhause versetzen*: to pawn) and where it is conserved (*aufbewahrt*: kept, entrusted, guarded, deposited, consigned).' In this allusion to the pyramid as the signification of signification and the representation of representation we can see some essential points involved. First, what we can call, without the least abuse or anachronism, the *arbitrary nature of the sign*. That is the absence of any *natural* relation of resemblance, participation or analogy between the signified and the signifier – here between the representation and the intuition, or rather between the represented and the representative in representation. This absence of any relation of resemblance is indicated in Hegel's text in two words:

1. The soul consigned in the pyramid is *foreign* (*fremde*). If the soul is *versetzt* – transposed, transferred, transplanted – in the signifying monument, it is then of a different order from the stone of the signifier, from the intuitive given. And this heterogeneity is first the irreducibility of the soul and the body, the intelligible and the sensible, the *Vorstellung* (the concept or ideality signified) and the sensible body of the signifier.
2. This is why Hegel says that in the sign the immediate intuition (that of the signifying body given) represents a totally different import (*einen ganz anderen Inhalt*) from the import it has for itself.

Thus there is a relation of absolute alterity between the signifying body, given to intuition and the ideal representation signified by this body. Hegel says expressly that this is precisely what distinguishes the sign from the symbol. The difference between the sign and the symbol is that there is no natural bond between the signifier and the signified, while between the symbolizing and the symbolized there is mimetic or analogical participation. 'The *sign* is different from the *symbol*; for in the symbol the original characters (*eigene Bestimmtheit*) (in essence and conception) of the visible object are more or less identical with the content which it bears as symbol; whereas in the sign, strictly so-called,

the natural attributes of the intuition, and the connotation of which it is the sign, have nothing to do with one another (*geht einander nichts an*).’ This theory of the arbitrary nature of the sign and this distinction between the sign and the symbol are explicated at length and clearly in the Introduction to the first section of the *Aesthetics* (‘On symbol in general’), to which I here permit myself to refer you.

If there still remained any doubt that the whole conceptual system that dominates the so-called linguistic revolution used as declared model by so many champions of the human sciences – I mean the conceptual system dominating Saussurian linguistics – belonged to metaphysics, it would be enough to compare the oppositions of concepts within which the principal level of Saussurian linguistics – the arbitrariness of signs – is brought forth with the oppositions of concepts that dominate Hegel’s semiology. I will then merely read a passage taken from the second paragraph of the first chapter of the first part of the *Course in General Linguistics*, a paragraph entitled: ‘Principle one: the arbitrary nature of the sign’:

Signs that are wholly arbitrary realize better than the others the ideal of the semiological process; that is why language, the most complex and universal of all systems of expression, is also the most characteristic; in this sense linguistics can become the master-pattern for all branches of semiology although language is only one particular semiological system. [We will soon find the same move in Hegel, the moment he accords pre-eminence to signs of spoken language and speech.]

The word *symbol* has been used to designate the linguistic sign, or more specifically, what is here called the signifier. Principle I in particular weighs against the use of this term. One characteristic of the symbol is that it is never wholly arbitrary; it is not empty, for there is the rudiment of a natural bond between the signifier and the signified. The symbol of justice, a pair of scales, could not be replaced by just any other symbol, such as a tank.

(p. 68)

This difference required between the signified and the signifier is entirely congruent with the move by which semiology is inscribed in psychology. We recall that psychology in the Hegelian sense is the science of mind determining itself in itself, as subject for itself, at the moment that, as Hegel says in the opening of the Psychology of the *Encyclopaedia*, ‘Mind henceforth has only to realize the concept of its freedom.’ But the production of arbitrary signs manifests the freedom of mind. Consequently freedom is more manifest in the production of the sign than in the production of the symbol; it is signified better by arbitrary signs than by more or less natural symbols. Mind is closer to itself and to its freedom in the arbitrary sign, whereas it is more outside of itself in the naturalness

of the symbol. Hegel writes: 'In signifying intelligence therefore manifests a will (*Willkür*: choice, free will) and a mastery (*Herrschaft*) in the use of intuitions which are not manifest in symbolizing' (§458).

The semiotic instance, which was a moment ago defined as the rational – though abstract – instance, is now defined as the manifestation of freedom. We then understand better that we must reserve a major place for semiology in the architectonics of a logic or a psychology. And that is indeed what Hegel wishes to do; but he in fact does so incidentally, in the middle of the Remark added as a long appendix to the short paragraph defining the sign. The pyramid itself arose in the space and in the detour of this excursus.

In logic and psychology, signs and language are usually foisted in somewhere as an appendix (*Anhang*: supplement, codicil), without any trouble being taken to display their necessity and systematic place (*Zusammenhang*: enchainment, solidarity) in the economy of intelligence. The right place for the sign is that just given . . . This sign-creating activity may be distinctively named '“productive” memory' (*produktive Gedächtnis*) (the primarily abstract 'Mnemosyne'); and since 'memory' (*Gedächtnis*), which in ordinary life is often used as interchangeable and synonymous with 'remembrance' (recollection) (*Erinnerung*), and even with 'conception' and 'imagination', has always to do with signs only.

(Remark, §458)

Here we see that inasmuch as the production of signs is concerned memory and imagination are the same, the same interiorization of mind relating itself to itself in its freedom and in the intuition of itself, but bringing this intuition of itself to exterior existence. This calls for three remarks:

1. This explains that the theory of signs that appears in the *Encyclopaedia* in the chapter on the imagination is immediately followed by the chapter on memory, and that in the *Propaedeutics* the same semiological discussion is inscribed under the title 'Memory'. I would have liked to read here certain passages of the *Propaedeutics*, but not having time, I refer you to the most important paragraphs: §§155–62.
2. In his fine essay on Proust G. Deleuze has shown very well that the *Remembrance of Things Past* was less an exercise of memory than a semiotic activity or experience. You see that Hegel does not distinguish between the two, and that there is here another occasion to underline an affinity between Proust and Hegel.
3. The memory that is productive of signs is also thought itself. And in a Remark that serves as the transition from the chapter devoted to memory in the *Encyclopaedia*, and the chapter devoted to thought, Hegel

recalls that 'the German language has etymologically assigned memory (*Gedächtnis*), of which it has become a foregone conclusion to speak contemptuously, the high position (*Stellung*) of direct kindred with thought (*Gedanke*)'.

III Speech and writing

There being no question of exposing and still less of exhausting the content of this semiology, I would like now to try to see its governing intention, what it signifies, what it means to say. In announcing this I have already begun to establish myself within this metaphysical semiology, which not only means to say, but first and essentially represents itself to be a theory of *Bedeuten* as meaning [*vouloir-dire*: lit., to want to say], and is from the first subject to the *telos* of speech and of this voluntarism, this will for absolute parousia in which Heidegger has discerned the destination of metaphysics. As later in de Saussure, language is here the paradigm for the sign, and linguistics is the model for semiology, of which, however, it is but a part.

How is that visible, and what are its implications? I shall state at once the substance of the thesis in question: it is the privilege of the linguistic – that is phonic – system, over every other semiotic system. A privilege, then, of speech over writing, and of phonetic writing over every other system of notation or every other form of inscription, in particular over hieroglyphic or ideographic writing, but also over formal mathematical writing, algebra, pasigraphics, and other projects of universal writing of the Leibnizian type, which, as Leibniz said, 'have in principle no need to refer to the voice' or to the word (*vox*).

Thus stated the thesis is well known; what interests me here is not to recall it, but, in re-forming it, in reconstituting its schema, to show what, in the excellence recognized to the voice, is essentially co-ordinated with the whole Hegelian system in its archaeology, its eschatology, its teleology, the will to parousia and in all the fundamental concepts of dialectics, and in particular negativity and *Aufhebung*. That is if one accepts, and in the measure that one accepts considering Hegelianism as the completion of Western metaphysics, the pre-eminence of the *phonē* is one with the essence of metaphysics. And thus whatever in certain modern sciences – for example in a certain work of glossematics carried out by Hjelmslev, but this is but one example – scientifically questions this privilege of the *vox*, both as voice and as word, in some measure transgresses the metaphysical closure itself.

Let us return to Hegel's text (§49): 'The intuition – in its natural phase a something given (*Gegebenes*) and given in space (*ein Räumliches*) – acquires, when employed as a sign, the peculiar characteristic of existing

only as superseded and sublimated (*aufgehobene* – *relevée* – lifted, in the sense that one would be at the same time elevated and relieved of one's functions, replaced, in a promotion by that which succeeds and relieves.)' In this sense the sign is the *Aufhebung* of the sensible and spatial intuition. In the sign the sensible-spatial intuition is sublated (*relevée*). Hegel thus says: 'The intuition – in its natural phase a something given and given in space – acquires, when employed as a sign, the peculiar characteristic of existing only as superseded and sublimated. Such is the negativity of intelligence.' Intelligence is then the movement that produces the sign by negating the sensible-spatial constituent of intuition, and in doing so sublates (*relève*) the intuition. But, as Hegel shows elsewhere,² the *Aufhebung* of space is time, which thus is space, is the truth of the space it negates by relieving or elevating it [*en en prenant la relève ou en le relevant*]. Here, then, the truth or teleological essence of the sign as sublation [*relève*] of the sensible-spatial intuition will be the sign as time, the sign in the element of temporalization. And this is indeed what Hegel goes on to say here: 'Such is the negativity of intelligence; and thus the truer phase of the intuition used as a sign is existence in *time*' (*Dasein* – the being-there in intuition – *in der Zeit*: a formula that we must think of at the same time as the one that says that time is the *Dasein* of the concept). Why is *Dasein* in time the truest form of intuition such as it is sublated [*relevée*] in the sign? Because time is the sublation [*relève*] of space: the sensible-spatial given must be sublated [*relève*] in its truth, that is the intuitive given – the signifier – must be effaced, must vanish before the ideality signified, while conserving itself and conserving it; and it is only in time, as time itself, that this sublation [*relève*] can be produced. But what is the signifying substance, what glossematicians call the expressive substance, most proper to be thus produced as time itself? It is sound, sound lifted from its naturalness and bound to the mind's relation with itself, to the *psychē* as subject for itself and auto-affecting itself – the animated sound, the phonic sound, the voice, the *Ton*.

Hegel immediately and rigorously draws out the consequence:

thus the truer phase of intuition used as a sign is an existence in *time* (but its existence vanishes in the moment of being [*indem es ist*: inasmuch as it is]), and if we consider the rest of its external psychic determination, its institution (*Gesetzsein*: being-positing) by intelligence, but an institution growing out of its (anthropological) own naturalness. This institution of the natural is the vocal note (*Ton*: *phonē*) where the inward idea manifests itself in adequate exteriorization (*erfüllte Äusserung*).

Here two remarks are called for:

1. The voice is what unites the anthropological naturalness of the (natural)

sound with the psychic-semiotic ideality, what consequently joins the Philosophy of Mind to the Philosophy of Nature, and within the Philosophy of Mind joins anthropology to psychology – between which, I recall, phenomenology, the science of consciousness, is inscribed.

2. The essentially phonic relation between the sensible and the intelligible, the real and the ideal etc., is also determined as a relation of expressivity between the inside and the outside. The language in sound, speech, which brings outside the inside, does not abandon it outside, as does a written sign; it conserves the inside within while putting it outside; it is then *par excellence* what gives existence, *Dasein*, to internal representation; it makes the concept or the signified exist. This means, in Hegelian language, that it is the essence of time as existence of the concept. But at the same time (so to speak) language, inasmuch as it interiorizes and temporalizes *Dasein* as it was in the given of sensible-spatial intuition, elevates existence itself, sublates [*relève*] it in its truth, at its highest level. It makes the sensible existence pass to representational or intellectual existence, to the existence of the concept. And this transition is precisely the moment of articulation that transforms the sound into voice and noise into language – a theme that would also merit a whole comparison with de Saussure. Hegel writes: ‘The vocal note (or the tone: *der Ton*) which receives further articulation to express specific ideas – speech (*die Rede*) and its system, language (*die Sprache*) – gives to sensations, intuitions, representations, a second and higher existence than they naturally possess, invests them with the right of existence in the realm of representation (*Überhaupt eine Existenz, die im Reiche des Vorstellens gilt*).’ Metaphysics: metaphysics of language. In this passage Hegel is interested only in ‘the proper determination of language as a product of intelligence’, that is language as ‘manifestation of representations in an external element’. Hegel, then, does not undertake the study of language itself. He has defined the order of general semiology and its place in psychology. He has, then, defined the place of linguistics within semiology, although semiology is the teleological model of linguistics. But he contents himself with this systematics or architectonics. He does not fill out the field whose limits and topography he delineates. There are, none the less, indications of the lineaments of such a linguistics. For example, he admits that linguistics must be distinguished into a formal (grammatical) element and a material (lexicological) element.

Lexicology – the science of the material of language – refers us to a discipline already treated before psychology, anthropology and, within anthropology, psycho-physiology. Why? Hegel explains in a fascinating paragraph concerning what he calls *physical ideality* (§401), which I cannot comment on, though I take it to be fundamental. Ideality in general is, in Hegelian terms, ‘the negation of the real, which is none the less at the same time conserved, virtually retained (*virtualiter erhal-*

ten), even if it does not exist'. But ideality as an element of language – since the sign is the sublation [*relève*] of the sensible intuition of the real – has its own *sense organs*, its own elements of sensibility. Two senses share physical ideality between them: the sense for light and the sense for sound. These two elements have a privilege to which Hegel devotes numerous and splendid analyses in the *Encyclopaedia* and in the *Aesthetics*.

In so far as *sound* is concerned, it is noteworthy that linguistics refers us from psychology to anthropology (psycho-physiology), and that this latter refers us to physics. It is the reverse route of the teleology and movement according to which the Idea is reappropriated to itself as mind by rising from and sublating the nature [*en (se) relevant (de) la nature*] in which it was lost while being betokened therein. But at the beginning of the Physics light is posited as the first but abstract manifestation, an undifferentiated identity of qualified prime matter. It is through the light that nature refers to itself, manifests itself to itself. As is said in the *Aesthetics*, 'light is the first ideality, the first auto-affirmation of nature. In light nature for the first time becomes subjective.'

Consequently sight is a theoretical sense, the first theoretical sense, as its name indicates. And it is also the first ideal sense. It lets the things be and does not consume them. There would be much to be said here about this Hegelian theme of consumption. Signs, Hegel reflects, are not consumed. And this is to be related to the fact that the signifying matter is for Hegel always sound or light. We should have to ask if there is no other, and even whether audible or visible signs are not in some way eaten or consumed.

In any case, if sight is ideal, hearing, Hegel notes, is even more so; it as it were sublates [*relève*] sight. Hegel explains why in the *Aesthetics*, in the chapter devoted to music: because despite the ideality of light and sight, the objects perceived by sight (and, for example, plastic art works) persist in their sensible and exterior existence, resist *Aufhebung*, do not allow themselves to be absolutely sublating by temporal interiority; they brake the dialectic. And what is true of plastic works will, we have no doubt, also be true of writing. But it will not be true of the audible and of speech. With regard to hearing Hegel says in the *Aesthetics* that

like sight it is a part not of the practical senses but the theoretical senses, and it is even more ideal than sight. For, since the calm, disinterested contemplation of works of art, far from seeking to suppress objects, lets them subsist as they are and where they are, what is conceived by sight is not the ideal in itself, but on the contrary perseveres in its sensible experience. But the ear, on the contrary, without practically (*praktisch*) turning to objects, perceives the result of the interior trembling (*innern Erzitterns*) of the body by which not

the calm material figure, but a first ideality coming from the soul is manifested and revealed. As, on the other hand, the negativity in which the vibrant matter (*schwingende Material*) enters constitutes a sublation (*Aufheben*) of the spatial state, which sublation [*relève*] is in its turn sublated by the reaction of the body, the exteriorization of this double negation, the sound (*Ton*) is an exteriorization which is in its upsurge annihilated again by its own being-there, and vanishes by itself. By this double negation of exteriority inherent in the principle of sound, sound corresponds to the internal subjectivity in that sonority (*Klingen*), which of itself already is more ideal than real corporeality, renounces even this ideal existence and thus becomes a mode of expression of pure interiority.

This decisive concept of vibration, of trembling (*Erzittern*) as a physical transition from space to time, as sublation of the visible in the audible, the real in the ideal, this teleological concept of *sound* as a movement of idealization and of *Aufhebung* of natural exteriority, is also explicated in the *Encyclopaedia* in the Physics (§300). We must then come back to it if we wish to account for the *material* part of language, that is lexicology.

As for grammar, or the *formal* element, it refers us to articulation in categories, and therefore to the understanding, which Hegel will treat of only later in the *Encyclopaedia* (§465). Grammar depends on logic and the 'logical instinct' [remark on Humboldt].

From this sublating, spiritual and ideal excellence of the *phonē* it ensues that every language in space, every spacing, for example writing, is *inferior* and *exterior*. Thus in the linguistic part of semiology Hegel can make the move he advises against in general semiology: he can make of the question of writing an accessory question treated as an appendix, an excursus, a supplement. This move, we know, was made by Plato and Rousseau; it will also be made by de Saussure. And it occurs here; after having explicitly said that vocal language (*Tonsprache*) is the primordial (*ursprüngliche*) language, Hegel writes:

We may also comment, but only in passing (*nur im Vorbeigehen*), upon the written language (*Schriftsprache*) – a further development (supplementary: *weitere Fortbildung*) in the particular sphere of language which borrows the help of an externally practical activity (a supplement, a memory aid, *hupomnēsis* etc.). It is from the province of immediate spatial intuition to which written language proceeds that it takes and produces (*hervorbringt*) the signs.

It is not possible for me here to develop all the implications of such a move. I shall content myself simply with entitling in a very schematic

and very programmatic manner the paths one should perhaps have to enter.

1. The teleological hierarchy of writings. At the summit of this hierarchy, phonetic writing of the alphabetical type. 'Alphabetic writing is in and for itself the most intelligent', says Hegel. Inasmuch as it respects, conveys and transcribes the voice as idealization and movement of mind relating itself to its own interiority, phonetic writing is the most historical element of culture, most open to infinite development. 'Learning to write an alphabetic writing must be considered a means of infinite culture (*unendliche Bildungsmittel*).' History as history of mind, the development of the concept as logos, the onto-theo-logical deployment of parousia, is not hindered, limited, interrupted by alphabetical writing, which, on the contrary, inasmuch as it better effaces its own spacing, is the highest, the most sublating mediation. This teleological appreciation of alphabetical writing is systematic, and it structurally commands the two following consequences:

a. Over and beyond the *fact* of alphabetical writing what is here aimed at is a teleological ideal of this writing. In effect, as everyone knows, and as Hegel recognizes with a lucidity very rare in this domain, there is no purely phonetic writing; the alphabetical system we use is not and cannot be completely phonetic. A writing can never be penetrated and sublated completely by the voice. And the non-phonetic functions, the – so to speak – silences, of alphabetic writing are not factual accidents or by-products one might hope to eliminate (punctuation, numbers, spacing). Hegel recognizes this in passing in a parenthesis he quickly closes, and in which we read, concerning hieroglyphic writing: '(and hieroglyphics are used even where there is alphabetic writing, as in our signs for the numbers, the planets, the chemical elements etc.)'.

b. The linguistics implicated by this appreciation is a linguistics of the *word* and the name, the word and the name being its simple and irreducible elements, bearing, in the *vox*, the unity of sound and meaning. But we know that the word no longer has today the linguistic dignity it had always had. It is a unity empirically excised between greater or lesser unities (cf. Martinet). To see that the word and the name are irreducible for Hegel, and that this has the most important consequences, it is enough to read these lines (Remark in §459):

Alphabetical writing is in and for itself the most intelligent; in it the *word* – the mode, peculiar to the intellect, of exteriorizing its representations most worthily (*eigentümlichste würdigste*) – is brought to consciousness and made an object of reflection . . . Thus alphabetical writing retains at the same time the advantage (*Vorteil*) of vocal language, that the representations have names strictly so called: the name is the simple sign for the exact representation, i.e. the simple

plain (*einfache*) representation, not decomposed in its features and compounded out of them.

This brings me to the second point:

2. The critique of every philosophical or scientific project of non-phonetic writing. The most eminent example is, of course, the Leibnizian project of universal characteristics. One of the essential arguments of the Hegelian critique is precisely that the word and the name would be dislocated, no longer constituting the irreducible and dialectical unity of language. Speaking of the hieroglyphic or Chinese writing, Hegel notes (as he does in other texts, notably in the *Logic*): 'this feature of hieroglyphic – the analytic designation of representations – which misled Leibniz to regard it as preferable to alphabetic writing is rather in antagonism with the fundamental desideratum of language – the name'.

In assigning limits to universal, that is mute writing, writing not bound to the voice and to natural languages, in assigning limits to the function of the mathematical symbolism and calculus, considered as the work of the formal understanding, Hegel wishes to show that such a reduction of speech would interrupt the movement of *Aufhebung*, which is the movement of idealization, of the history of mind and the reappropriation of logos in the presence to itself and infinite parousia. What is most written, most spaced, least vocal and internal in writing is what resists dialectics and history. We then cannot question the Hegelian concept of writing without questioning the whole history of metaphysics. For it is not a question of returning to Leibniz, concerning whom I have endeavoured elsewhere to show that his project remained metaphysical, and is fundamentally accessory to the system on the basis of which Hegel addresses his objections to him.

The writing from which metaphysics is to be questioned in its closure is then not writing such as metaphysics had itself determined it, that is such as our history and our culture enable us to think it, in the most familiar evidence of what is obvious. This writing in which the outside of metaphysics is announced could have, among other names, that of difference.

Notes

1. Patrick Hochart – to whom I here express my gratitude – has called my attention to this passage from the *Cræylus*, more rarely if ever cited, which is for us more pertinent than the celebrated text of the *Gorgias* (493a) on the *sōma sēma* couple: 'SOCRATES: You mean *sōma* (the body). HERMOGENES: Yes, SOCRATES: That may be variously interpreted; and yet more variously if a little permutation is allowed. For some say that the body is the grave (*sēma*) of the soul which may be thought to be buried in our present life; or again the index of the soul, because

the soul gives indications to (*sēmeinai*) the body; probably the Orphic poets were the inventors of the name, and they were under the impression that the soul is suffering the punishment of sin, and that the body is an enclosure or prison in which the soul is incarcerated, kept safe (*sōma*, *sōzētai*), as the name *sōma* implies, until the penalty is paid; according to this view, not even a letter of the word need be changed' (400 bc).

2. I permit myself at this point to refer to another essay, '*Ousia et gramme*, Note sur une note de *Sein und Zeit*', published in *L'Endurance de la pensée*, Paris, 1968.

Extract from *The Young Hegel* (1948)

Georg Lukács

***Entäusserung* ('Externalization') as the central philosophical concept of
*The Phenomenology of Mind***

Before turning to a detailed analysis of the concept of 'externalization' it may be as well to recapitulate briefly the growth of the problem and the history of the concept in Hegel's works. It will be remembered that in his republican phase in Berne the term 'positivity' was used to describe an institution or a complex of ideas standing opposed in lifeless objectivity to the subjectivity, and above all the praxis of man. Even at that early date 'positivity' was used to define the specific character of modern society. At that time, however, Hegel contrasted it rigidly with the 'non-positive' age of Greek democracy. His philosophy of history culminated in the revolutionary hope that the revival of antiquity in and through the French Revolution would lead to a new era of freedom, and the true hegemony of man, an era without 'positivity'.

The disappointment of these hopes which triggered off the Frankfurt crisis in his thought brought in its wake a more historical and dialectical conception of 'positivity'. Modern institutions were no longer hopelessly 'positive' from the very outset, but instead Hegel became increasingly interested in discovering in detail just how something *became* 'positive', how the relations between man's social praxis and the institutions of society originate, how they decline and how they are transformed in the course of history. This greater concreteness went hand in hand with his study of the intellectual implications of English economic theory, with his deepening interest in the economic problems of capitalism and his growing insight into them. And we have seen also how Hegel gradually began to formulate his own specific concept of dialectics in the course of his own intellectual crisis. The further the process advanced and the more mature Hegel's own philosophy became, the more the concept of

'positivity' receded into the background. It never disappeared entirely, but, increasingly, it came to be used in the sense in which lawyers and theologians speak of positive law or positive theology. The philosophical generality of the Berne and Frankfurt periods vanished. Typically, however, the word 'positive' embodied in Hegel's philosophy could not allow the great age of an institution to be used to justify its further existence. For many years after the Jena period Hegel continued to treat this sort of 'positivity' as the lifeless detritus of history, to be cleared away as soon as possible.

Thus the maturing and deepening of Hegel's philosophy only eliminated the concept of 'positivity', not the problem to which it had referred in Frankfurt, namely, the dialectical relation of the praxis of man in society to the objects he has created. It is not necessary to rehearse here the results of our analysis either of the social content or the philosophical terminology of Hegel's Jena period. In the course of his uninterrupted experimentation with terminology, what emerged more and more clearly was that the primal immediacy, the natural, has to be overcome and is overcome in the social praxis of man. It is replaced by a system of institutions created by man in the course of his own labours and endeavours. These labours not only create the institutions of society; they also transform the human subject since they annul his original immediacy, alienating the subject from itself.

In the course of his debate first with subjective idealism and later with objective idealism in its Schellingian form, Hegel developed a new terminology with which to describe these novel ideas and to translate into the general language of philosophy the social phenomena that he had come to understand in his study of history and economics. In this way concepts such as 'mediation' and 'reflection' acquired their specifically Hegelian significance. Likewise, the abstract theory of contradictions and their unity, first formulated in Frankfurt, evolved into the mature theory of the movement of contradictions and their supersession. In the course of this development the terms *Entäusserung* (externalization) and *Entfremdung* (alienation) came to occupy a central position in the Hegelian system. It is difficult to establish the exact chronology here. We noted that the *Lectures* of 1803–4 still operated to a great extent with Schelling's terminology. In the *Lectures* of 1805–6 the term *Entäusserung* occurs repeatedly, but is by no means dominant, although in both lecture courses, particularly the later ones, very many of the social and philosophical problems which become the problems of 'externalization' in the *Phenomenology* are already present and given the sort of treatment they receive later, but without being gathered together under the general heading of 'externalization'. Not until the *Phenomenology* do we find the new conceptual system fully worked out and applied.

In themselves there is nothing novel about the terms *Entäusserung* and

Entfremdung. They are simply German translations of the English word 'alienation'. This was used in works on economic theory to betoken the sale of a commodity and in works on natural law to refer to the loss of an aboriginal freedom, the handing-over or alienation of freedom to the society which came into being as a result of a social contract. Philosophically, the term *Entäusserung* was first used, to the best of my knowledge, by Fichte, for whom it meant both that the positing of an object implied an externalization or alienation of the subject and that the object was to be thought of as an 'externalized' act of reason.¹

The same problem but with a different terminology turns up in the early works of Schelling. We quote his comments on it since they testify both to his flair for discerning new problems and to his extremism, his tendency to exaggerate his own dialectical insights until they suddenly harden out into sterile dogmas, very much in contrast to Hegel. Schelling uses the term 'to condition' (*bedingen*) to describe what Hegel will later call 'externalization'.

To *condition* is the name we give to the action by virtue of which something becomes a *thing*; *conditioned* (*bedingt*) is what has become a thing (*Ding*). And this makes clear at the same time that no thing can be posited *as a thing by itself*, i.e. an unconditioned thing (*ein unbedingtes Ding*) is a contradiction. For that which is *unconditioned* is something which has not been and cannot be made into a thing.²

There can be no doubt that Schelling is touching upon the same problem with which Hegel has been so profoundly preoccupied. In contrast to Hegel, Schelling easily hits upon an elegant and ingenious solution which 'only' suffers from the slight defect that it opens up a yawning abyss between praxis and the object, thus rendering the entire problem intractable for Schelling himself. However, since these terminological experiments are merely episodes as far as Fichte and Schelling are concerned, episodes which exert no lasting influence on the problems with which they were most deeply concerned, there is no reason to deny Hegel the credit of having developed an original conceptual system in the *Phenomenology*, notwithstanding the use made of certain elements by his predecessors.

In the *Phenomenology* the term 'externalization' is deployed at a very high level of philosophical generality. It has flown far above its original use in economics and social theory. Nevertheless, it is possible to establish with some precision the various meanings given to it by Hegel and which derive from its original use as well as its later philosophical accretions.

We may in fact distinguish three stages in the Hegelian concept of 'externalization'. (1) It refers first to the complex subject-object relation inseparably bound up with all work and all human activity of an economic

or social kind. What is involved here is the problem of the objectivity of society, of its development, of the laws governing that development, all this in the general context of the idea that men make their own history themselves. History, then, is regarded as a complex dialectical evolution of the human race, a process rich in contradictions and interactions, propelled by the praxis of socialized individuals. Hegel's achievement in establishing the dialectical relations between subjectivity and objectivity represents a prodigious step forward. On the one hand, it is a great advance on the old materialists who had been unable to reconcile the importance of subjective human praxis with the objectivity of what were largely thought of as 'natural' laws of society (for example the climate) and so were unable to move beyond the antinomies resulting from an exaggerated emphasis on one or other of these 'natural' phenomena. On the other hand, it is also a great advance on Kant and Fichte, in whose writings necessity and objectivity constitute a world in themselves utterly alien to and different from freedom and praxis. As we have seen, Schelling made efforts to go a step further in his objective-idealist phase, but his innovations turned out to be no more than obscure premonitions which were put forward in a declamatory rather than true philosophical manner.

(2) Second, there is the specifically capitalist form of 'externalization, i.e. what Marx would later call 'fetishism'. Naturally, Hegel has no clear insight into what is involved here, if only because his view of the economic base of class conflict does not go beyond an empirical division into rich and poor, and this is not sufficient for him to deduce any significant theoretical conclusions. But he undoubtedly has intimations of the problems arising from the fetishization of objects in capitalist society, and it must be stated that in this respect he stands alone in classical German idealism. Needless to say, the absence of a grounding in economic theory leads him constantly to confuse this class of 'externalized' social objectivity with the first, i.e. he regards many things as the products of social work, of human praxis in general, which are in actuality only the fetish-forms of objectivity specific to capitalism, and *vice versa*. Despite this defect, which is one of the central foci of Marx's criticism, there are undoubtedly powerful tendencies in Hegel to explain the fetishized objectivity of socio-economic formations in terms of the social relations between men.

Here, too, idealism leads Hegel badly astray, and in the process of reducing social formations to human relations he frequently overlooks the mediating role of things. Frequently, but not invariably. This particular form of idealism, occurs, to the best of my knowledge, earlier in Hegel than elsewhere, although it is not uncommon in early attempts to explain fetishized forms of objectivity. It becomes prominent, for

example, in the break-up of the Ricardo school. Marx comments on it in his discussion of Hodgskin:

The whole objective world, the 'world of commodities', vanishes here as a mere aspect, as the merely passing activity, constantly performed anew, of socially producing men. Compare this 'idealism' with the crude, material fetishism into which the Ricardian theory develops in the writings 'of this incredible cobbler', MacCulloch, where not only the difference between man and animal disappears but even the difference between a living organism and an inanimate object. And then let them say that as against the lofty idealism of bourgeois political economy, the proletarian opposition has been preaching a crude materialism directed exclusively towards the satisfaction of coarse appetites.³

Of course, the profound differences between Hodgskin and Hegel should not be overlooked. Hodgskin is able to draw socialist conclusions from Ricardo's theory of value, albeit confused and contradictory ones. Hegel, as we saw, had not even understood all the problems and contradictions in Adam Smith's theories at the time when he was working on the *Phenomenology*. There can be no question of him deriving socialist ideas from there. And it goes without saying that Hodgskin is and had to be a good deal clearer and more penetrating than Hegel on all such questions. Nevertheless, there is no gain saying that Hegel's thoughts were moving powerfully in this direction and that he was the only thinker concerned to deduce philosophical conclusions from these economic facts.

(3) Third, there is a broad philosophical extension of the concept 'externalization' which then comes to be synonymous with 'thinghood' or objectivity. This is the form in which the history of objectivity is portrayed: objectivity as a dialectical moment in the journey of the identical subject-object on its way back to itself via 'externalization'. Hegel says:

The mind's immediate existence, *conscious life*, has two aspects – cognition and objectivity which is opposed to or negative of the subjective function of knowing. Since it is in the medium of consciousness that mind is developed and brings out its various moments, this opposition between the factors of conscious life is found at each stage in the evolution of mind, and all the various moments appear as modes or forms of consciousness. The scientific statement of the course of this development is a science of the *experience* through which consciousness passes; the substance and its process are considered as the object of consciousness. Consciousness knows and comprehends nothing but what falls within its experience; for what is found in experience is merely spiritual substance, and, moreover, *object* of itself. Mind, however, becomes object, for it consists in the process of becoming an

other to itself, i.e. an *object for its own self*, and in transcending this otherness.⁴

The essential tendencies of the mystification involved in the retraction of 'externalization' are already familiar to us. But we know too that by thinking of 'externalization' as a process and by regarding the absolute, the identical subject-object as the end-product of that process, he opened up entirely new terrain in which to explore the implications of the essential dialectical determinations of objective reality 'so that, ultimately, the Hegelian system represents merely a materialism idealistically turned upside down in method and content.'⁵

It would be a grave error to take Engels' statement to imply that one had merely to turn Hegel the right, i.e. the materialist, way up again. Our investigations have shown that, on the contrary, quite crucial problems have been distorted by the idealist method and that in the treatment of individual issues, important insights continually rub shoulders with idealist distortions, sometimes even in the same sentence. It would also be wrong to focus on the large area opened up to analysis which we have emphasized for the sake of simplicity and clarity, as if all were well on the journey towards the absolute and the idealist mystifications intervened only at the very end. We believe that our earlier concrete analyses have shown such ideas to be misconceived. Here, we must confine ourselves to a statement of the most important problems.

The false equation of 'externalization' and 'thinghood' or objectivity leads Hegel to make quite false distinctions in his definition of nature and society and his attempt to distinguish between them. According to his view both nature and history are 'externalization' of the spirit. But nature is an eternal externalization, its movement is a pseudo-movement, a movement of the subject; in Hegel's theory nature has no real history.

This last form into which spirit passes, *nature*, is its living immediate process of development. Nature – spirit divested of self (externalized) – is, in its actual existence, nothing but this eternal process of abandoning its (nature's) own independent *subsistence*, and the movement which reinstates subject.⁶

In contrast to this, 'externalization' in the social praxis of the human race, i.e. in history, is an 'externalization' of the spirit in time, that is to say, there is a real process of becoming and real history. Of course, in the end, as we shall see, even this turns out to be a pseudo-movement, despite Hegel's intentions. About this form of 'externalization', Hegel writes as follows:

the other aspect, however, in which spirit comes into being, *history*,

is the process of becoming in terms of knowledge, a *conscious self-mediating process* – spirit externalized and emptied into time. But this form of externalization is, similarly, the emptying of itself by itself; the negative is negative of itself. This way of becoming presents a slow procession and succession of spiritual shapes, a gallery of pictures, each of which is endowed with the entire wealth of spirit, and moves so slowly just for the reason that the self has to permeate and assimilate all this wealth of its substance. Since its accomplishment consists of spirit knowing *what it is*, in fully *comprehending* its substance, this knowledge means its *concentrating itself on itself* (*Insichgehen*), a state in which spirit leaves its external existence behind and gives its embodiment over to recollection (*Erinnerung*).⁷

The immediate methodological implications of the distinction between the form assumed by 'externalization' in nature and history is something we have already observed in the *Phenomenology*. In section B, where Hegel focuses on real history, the problems of nature are as good as non-existent. They are treated only in sections A and C, and in the latter, above all, Hegel's view of the objectivity of nature contributes in no small measure to the mystifications of the problems of dialectics. But over and above that, it spells the end of any real interaction between nature and society, as well as the history of nature during the development of society. As a disciple of the enlightenment Hegel is by no means ignorant of the relations between nature and society and of those social developments determined by natural conditions (such as the climate). In his later philosophy of history these problems reappear, but only as part of the general introduction to history, on the substance of which they do not really impinge.

Even more revealing is the fact that, great dialectician of history though he was, he does not even mention the historical development of nature itself, despite Kant's great discoveries in the field of cosmogony (which, incidentally, remained quite without influence on Kant's own philosophical system and failed to historicize his own view of nature). Nor did the important efforts of some others of his contemporaries, above all Goethe, to introduce the notion of development into the organic world influence him in this direction.

There is, of course, a development of a sort in Hegel's philosophy of nature, but it is precisely not historical: it does not unfold in time. Temporal development is reserved by him for history in the narrower sense, for the history of human society. This is not to deny the existence of contrary tendencies in his work. But they never get beyond the initial stages, whereupon they break off abruptly. In the *Jena Logic*, for example, there is an incipient analysis of the earth in evolutionary terms as the theatre of human history. However, the idea that there has been

history, but there is none any more, then makes its appearance with a vengeance: according to Hegel by the time human history is launched, the history of the earth is completed and has ceased utterly to develop further. And even while it was still developing, the picture Hegel gives of it is highly contradictory. We quote his final summary since this is typical of the whole:

The present moment reached by the earth in its cycle is one of immobility; it has emerged from its process; in this moment it really is the whole, and the character of determinate existence has been stamped on it, a determinate existence, however, which endures, since it is removed from time. . . . The earth, then, as this totality, represents this image of process without the process itself. . . . The living process of the earth is present only in its elements, not in its totality. . . . For this content, then, the process is something in the past; to infuse life into it through time and to represent the moments of its formation as a sequence does not impinge upon its content.⁸

Since all of Hegel's statements on this theme are full of contradictions and since we have always found important dialectical and historical discoveries concealed beneath his mystifications, it will not come as a surprise to learn that his over-sharp distinction between 'externalization', i.e. objectivity, in nature and in history also has its positive side, and that here too Hegel is on the track of important discoveries. His aim is to clarify the particular character of human existence, and he is condemned to do so in an age when the thinkers closest to him in the field of the dialectics of objective idealism (Schelling and Goethe) were excessively preoccupied with nature. It was an age in which the ideas of such men were taken up and exaggerated and developed into a romantic, mystical cult of nature philosophy which threatened to engulf all efforts to achieve a really concrete analysis of the historical development of society in an all-consuming formalist mysticism of the 'eternal' and the 'natural'.

In circumstances such as these it is easy to understand how Hegel came to make such an abrupt distinction between nature and history, and even to make a moral issue of the superiority of spirit over nature. There is a very interesting statement to that effect in the Jena Lectures:

In actual fact the individual spirit can depend on the energy of his own character and can assert his individuality, regardless of nature. His negative attitude towards nature, although it differs from himself, scorns its power, and in this scorn he holds nature at arm's length, preserving his freedom. And in fact the individual is only great and free in proportion to the extent of this contempt for nature.⁹

This extreme expression of Hegel's position should not blind us to the fact that he is speaking here of the individual man who acts and that therefore his observations here do not cancel out or in any sense contradict his polemic against his violation of nature at the hands of the subjective idealism of Fichte.

Marx was fully appreciative of Hegel's attitude here, one which frequently recurs in his later works. Lafargue reports that Marx often quoted the following remark of Hegel's with approval:

Even the criminal thought of a malefactor has more grandeur and nobility than the wonders of the heavens.¹⁰

The aim of such paradoxical formulations is to make a sharp distinction between specific sides of man's social evolution and evolution in nature. And even if Hegel did not take the evolution of nature into account, he nevertheless touched upon a fundamental determination of the evolution of society: the idea that men make their own history. Marx too endorses this distinction between the two forms of history, though of course within the context of a true appreciation of their objectivity and unity. Thus, for example, after talking of Darwin's idea of Nature's Technology he calls for a critical history of human technology:

And would not such a history be easier to compile, since, as Vico says, human history differs from natural history in this, that we have made the former, but not the latter?¹¹

This side of human history was correctly intuited by Hegel, as by Vico, even though he failed to recognize, and hence mystified, the other side, the history of nature.

To recognize and to give Hegel the credit both for having constructed a rich and in many respects valid picture of human history and also for having discovered many of the essential determinations of historiography is not to deny the distortions introduced by the mystificatory aspects of 'externalization'. Here, too, through his conception of the whole Hegel cancels out what he had so laboriously, thoroughly and ingeniously built up in the course of his analysis of the parts. We have already mentioned that the historical process as a whole has a definite goal, one which takes the form of its own self-annulment, its own return into the identical subject-object. Similarly, we have seen that Hegel thinks of history in general as an 'externalization' of spirit into time. Hence the reintegration of history in the absolute subject implies the annulment of time, which in its turn is the consequence of the annulment of objectivity. It is not the case that the dialectical process of history is suspended between two mystical points, with the beginning and end of time defined in terms of

religious categories of the creation etc. In Hegel's scheme, the beginning and end of the historical process coincide, i.e. the end of history is prefigured in its beginning. What we have here, then, is the same negation of a brilliant conception by an unbounded, all-engulfing process of generalization as we found in our discussion of Hegel's teleological ideas. He is quite explicit about this aspect of his historical scheme:

But this substance, which is spirit, is the *development* of itself explicitly to what it is *inherently and implicitly*; and only as this process of reflecting itself into itself is it essentially and in truth *spirit*. It is inherently the movement which is the process of knowledge – the transforming of the *inherent nature* into *explicitness*, of *substance* into *subject*, of the object of *consciousness* into the object of *self-consciousness*, i.e. into an object that is at the same time transcended – in other words into the *concept*. This transforming process is a cycle that returns into itself, a cycle that presupposes its beginning, and reaches its beginning only at its end.¹²

This end, however, is absolute spirit at its peak, as absolute knowledge, as philosophy. History is reduced to a process which is acted out in reality but which reaches its consummation, the goal immanent in it, the nature implicitly contained in it from the very beginning, only in philosophy, in a *post-festum* commentary on the path leading up to it. This idea is of such overwhelming significance for the view of history in the *Phenomenology* that it occupies a central position in the conclusion of the entire work:

But *recollection* (*Er-innerung*) has conserved that experience, and is the inner being, and, in fact, the higher form of the substance. While, then, this phase of spirit begins all over again its formative development, apparently starting solely from itself, yet at the same time it commences at a higher level. The realm of spirits developed in this way, and assuming definite shape in existence, constitutes a succession, where one detaches and sets loose the other, and each takes over from its predecessor the empire of the spiritual world. The goal of the process is the revelation of the depth of spiritual life, and this is the *absolute concept*. This revelation consequently means superseding its 'depth', is its 'extension' or *spatial* embodiment, the negation of this inwardly, self-centred ego – a negativity which is its self-relinquishment, its externalization, or its substance; and this revelation is also its *temporal* embodiment, in that this externalization in its very nature relinquishes (externalizes) itself, and so exists at once in its spatial 'extension' as well as in its 'depth' or the self. The *goal*, which is absolute knowledge or spirit knowing itself as spirit, finds its pathway

in the recollection of spiritual forms as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organization of their spiritual kingdom. Their conservation, looked at from the side of their free existence appearing in the form of contingency, is *history*; looked at from the side of their intellectually comprehended organization, it is the *science of the ways in which knowledge appears*. Both together, or history comprehended (*begriffen*), form at once the recollection and the Golgotha of absolute spirit, the reality, the truth, the certainty of its throne, without which it were lifeless, solitary and alone. Only

The chalice of this realm of spirits
Foams forth to God his own Infinitude.¹³

This amounts to the self-annulment of history. History is transformed into the mere realization of a goal inherent in its subject, its spirit from the very outset. At the same time, its immanent reality is also annulled: history does not contain its own real autonomous laws of motion, but on the contrary, the latter only really exist and come into their own in the science that comprehends and annuls history, i.e. in absolute knowledge. But this annuls the whole scheme of history elaborated by objective idealism. The spirit which is supposed to make history and whose very essence is supposed to be the fact that it is the actual driving force, the motor of history, ends up by turning history into a mere simulacrum, as Marx has argued in *The Holy Family*:

Hegel is . . . inconsistent . . . because according to him the absolute spirit makes history only in *appearance*. For as the absolute spirit becomes *conscious* of itself as the creative world-spirit only in the philosopher and *post festum*, its making of history exists only in the consciousness, in the opinion and conception of the philosopher, i.e. in the speculative imagination.¹⁴

All this – and we have drawn attention only to the most essential points – is the necessary consequence of Hegel's concept of 'externalization'. It is at this point that the young Marx's great criticism of Hegel's central dilemma intervenes in the debate. This criticism is one of the crucial texts in the process of turning the idealist dialectic into a materialist one and in the criticism of Hegelian idealism. At the same time it is a *locus classicus* establishing continuity between the dialectical heritage and the new science of dialectical materialism.

In the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* of 1844, Marx provides a comprehensive and systematic criticism of the Hegelian dialectic.¹⁵ This criticism has two methodological characteristics of interest to us.

(1) In the first place, it concentrates on *The Phenomenology of Mind*,

and within this, on Hegel's conception of 'externalization' and its supersession. This emphasis, meaningful in itself, can also be explained by reference to the polemical needs of the period, since the subjectivization of Hegelian philosophy carried out by the Young Hegelians, Bruno Bauer and Max Stirner in particular, was based largely on the *Phenomenology* and extends its mystification into realms not dreamed of by Hegel. The philosophical annihilation of this Left-Hegelianism was an important premise both of the new science of dialectical materialism and also of the theoretical and practical programme of the workers' party then in the process of formation. Marx's arguments here, then, are in a sense preparatory to the *Communist Manifesto*.

On the other hand, as we shall see, the critique of Hegel's concept of 'externalization' forms an important element of Feuerbach's criticism of Hegel and hence of the great shift from idealism to materialism that took place in Germany in the 1840s. Feuerbach's criticism is a concentrate of the virtues as well as the defects and limitations of Feuerbach's materialism. Marx's critique of Hegel's 'externalization' shows him entering into possession of the Feuerbachian heritage, and at the same time we see him transcending the old materialism dialectically and leaving it behind.

(2) The second important characteristic of Marx's critique is that for the first time in Germany since Hegel himself it combines economic and philosophical perspectives in its treatment of the problems of society and philosophy. Needless to say, this functions at an incomparably higher level in Marx than in Hegel, and this is as true of the philosophical as of the economic aspect. Philosophically, as we know, the problem is the replacement of idealist by materialist dialectics. The critique of idealism here is based on a much greater knowledge of economics than was available to Hegel. Marx's economic observations already contain a *socialist critique* of the ideas of the classics of economic theory. (The brilliant essay of the young Engels in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* had already appeared a little earlier.) And it is only this socialist criticism of capitalist economics and its scientific formulation in the works of the classics of economic theory that makes it possible to discover the real dialectical movement in the actual life of the economy, in the economic praxis of man. The rapid progress made by the young Marx and Engels in their study of the real dialectics of economic life soon laid the foundations for the criticism of the ideas which had sought to grasp that life: the classics of economic theory, on the one hand, and Hegel, on the other.

Thus Marx's emphasis on 'externalization' as the central concept of the *Phenomenology* and of idealist dialectics in general was not the result of an arbitrary decision. Hegel's inspired guess on the basis of very incomplete knowledge of economics enabled him to see that 'externalization', alienation, was a fundamental fact of life, and *for that reason* he put it

in the centre of philosophy. Marx's critique of Hegel proceeds from a more profound and accurate grasp of the *economic realities*. That is to say, it was first necessary to gain an understanding of the fundamental facts of economics on the basis of a socialist critique of the alienation of labour under capitalism before it became possible to assess the rights and wrongs, the essential truths and the mystifications of Hegel's interpretation of them.

The one-sidedness of Feuerbach's criticism of Hegel is due in great measure to the fact that he analysed and overcame Hegel's 'externalization' only in its ultimate philosophical consequences. He had no conception whatever of the process that led from reality itself to the philosophical conception and that threw up such a contradictory reflection in his philosophy. That is to say, he had no inkling of the connections between economics and philosophy. Hence his criticism remained one-sided, incomplete and abstract. Hence, too, despite his materialist opposition to Hegel's idealism, he was not really able to overcome the limitations and defects of Hegel's thought, for these ultimately were social and not philosophical; as we shall see, they were closely bound up with the nature of bourgeois society.

The bond between economics and philosophy is, then, a profound necessity: it is the precondition for any real refutation of Hegel's idealist dialectic and for any further advance. For that reason it would be superficial to imagine that Marx's concern with Hegel begins only in the last portion of the Manuscript which contains the critique of the *Phenomenology*. The four preceding sections on economics, which do not expressly concern themselves with Hegel at all, are nevertheless the foundation on which that criticism is built: they provide the economic clarification of the real nature of alienation. We shall quote only a few of Marx's salient definitions. Marx takes as his point of departure the real facts of capitalist economics. He rejects every type of economic Robinsonade out of hand. For the latter explain the division of labour, exchange etc., just as theology explains the origin of evil by means of the Fall, i.e. by assuming the existence of the very thing whose origins it is supposed to explain. On the basis of an analysis of the actual facts of capitalist economics Marx gives this definition of alienation as it is created in the labour process:

This fact expresses merely that the object which labour produces – labour's product – confronts it as *something alien*, as a *power independent* of the producer. The product of labour is labour which has been embodied in an object, which has become material: it is the *objectification* of labour. Labour's realization is its objectification. In the sphere of political economy this realization of labour appears as *loss of realization* for the workers; objectification as *loss of the object*

and *bondage to it*; appropriation as *alienation*, as *externalization*. . . . All these consequences result from the fact that the worker is related to the *product of his labour* as to an *alien* object.¹⁶

Hegel is not even mentioned here by name, and no philosophical inference is drawn from this economic analysis. But even a cursory glance is enough to reveal that these apparently descriptive remarks in fact contain a fundamental critique of Hegel's philosophy. For alienation is sharply distinguished from objective reality, from objectification in the act of labour. The latter is a characteristic of work in general and of the relation of human praxis to the objects of the external world; the former is a consequence of the social division of labour under capitalism, of the emergence of the so-called free worker who has to work with the means of production belonging to another and for whom, therefore, these means of production as well as his own product exist as an independent, alien power.

Now when we examine the process of labour itself, this fundamental aspect of capitalist society appears to be doubly intensified and concentrated in the person of the worker. Marx emphasizes here above all

the fact that labour is *external* to the worker, i.e. it does not belong to his essential being; that in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He is at home when he is not working, and when he is working he is not at home.

This results in the inversion of all human values:

What is animal becomes human and what is human becomes animal. Certainly, eating, drinking, procreating etc. are also genuinely human functions. But abstractly taken, separated from the sphere of all other human activity and turned into sole and ultimate ends, they are animal functions.¹⁷

In this way alienation permeates the entire subjective and objective reality of human life. Objectively, the product of labour appears as an alien thing ruling over man; subjectively, the process of labour is a self-alienation corresponding to the alienation of the thing described above.

From these premises, all of which without exception are the product of a close examination of economic realities, he comes to the following conclusions about the relation of the individual to the species in capitalist society:

In alienating from man (1) nature, and (2) himself, his own active functions, his life activity, alienated labour alienates the *species* from man. . . . First, it alienates the life of the species and individual life, and second it makes individual life in its abstract form the purpose of the life of the species, likewise in its abstract and alienated form.¹⁸

It is obvious that such insights into the alienation of labour with all its human and social consequences could only be obtained through a socialist criticism of capitalism. This circumstance enables us to appreciate the full implications of Marx's statement that Hegel does indeed stand on the heights of classical economic theory and that he has a genuine understanding of work as the process by which man creates himself, but that he has no insight into the negative aspects of work in capitalist society since he only considers its positive sides. Marx's whole criticism of the fundamental concepts of the *Phenomenology* is based on this assertion: since Hegel does not see the negative aspects of work, he becomes guilty of false distinctions and false syntheses, of the mystifications of idealism. The discovery of the true dialectics of labour in capitalist society is the precondition for a materialist critique of the philosophy which developed a one-sided view of labour and made it into the foundation of a general philosophy of the evolution of the human race.

We have already referred to Marx's comment that Hegel's philosophy contains a tendency towards an 'uncritical idealism'. This 'uncritical idealism' is expressed – and here we are already poised at the centre of the critique of the *Phenomenology* – in Hegel's view of what philosophy is. Hegel speaks of 'externalization' and its annulment by philosophy. He does not suspect, however, that the philosophy which is supposed to annul 'externalization' is itself an egregious instance of 'externalization':

the philosophic mind is nothing but the alienated mind of the world thinking within its self-estrangement – i.e. comprehending itself abstractly. *Logic* (mind's *coin of the realm*, the speculative or *thought-value* of man and nature – their essence grown totally indifferent to all real determinateness, and hence their unreal essence) is *externalized thinking*, and therefore thinking which abstracts from real man: *abstract thinking*.¹⁹

Hegel does not perceive this, and by failing to notice that alienated thought is alienated and by regarding it, indeed, as the very instrument by which alienation can be annulled, he succumbs to an uncritical idealism and turns the true pattern of alienation on its head. Consistently with this, Hegelian idealism identifies man with his self-consciousness.

All alienation of human essence is therefore *nothing but alienation of*

self-consciousness. The alienation of self-consciousness is not regarded as an *expression* of the *real* alienation of the human being – its expression reflected in the realm of knowledge and thought. Instead, the *real* alienation – that which appears real – is according to its *innermost*, hidden nature (a nature first brought to light by philosophy) nothing but the *manifestation* of the estrangement of the real essence of man, of *self-consciousness*. The science which comprehends this is therefore called *Phenomenology*. All reappropriation of the alienated objective essence appears, therefore, as a process of incorporation into self-consciousness: the man who takes hold of his essential being is *merely* the self-consciousness which takes hold of objective essences. Return of the object into the self is therefore the reappropriation of the object.²⁰

Marx's critical comments show succinctly how the false identification of man and self-consciousness necessarily springs from a false view of alienation in society. On the subjective side, there is the mistaken identification of man and self-consciousness demonstrated and criticized by Marx; on the objective side, there is the equation of alienation and objectification in general.

In his discussion of economics Marx, drawing on his knowledge of the empirical evidence, distinguishes sharply between objectification in work in general and the alienation of subject and object in the *capitalist form* of work. Armed with this distinction he can expose Hegel's erroneous equation. He proffers the following criticism of the methodological foundations of the *Phenomenology*:

It is not the fact that the human being *objectifies himself inhumanly*, in opposition to himself, but the fact that he *objectifies himself in distinction* from and in *opposition* to abstract thinking that constitutes the essence of the alienation and the thing to be superseded.²¹

Hegel's false problem, with which we are now thoroughly familiar from our discussion of the *Phenomenology* and its antecedents, is followed by the equally false culmination of his philosophy in the annulment of objectivity:

The task, therefore, is to surmount the *object of consciousness*. *Objectivity* as such is regarded as an *alienated* human relationship which does not correspond to the *essence of man*, to self-consciousness. The *reappropriation* of the objective essence of man, begotten in the form of alienation as something alien, therefore not only as the annulment of *alienation*, but of *objectivity* as well. Man, that is to say, is regarded as a *non-objective*, *spiritual* being.²²

We can see quite clearly here how the false idealist problem with its equally false idealist solution springs necessarily from Hegel's no less necessarily one-sided and incomplete interpretation of capitalist society. It is no less clear that this, the highest form of idealist dialectics, can only be wholly superseded if and when a socialist critique of capitalist economics has been rendered practicable by the emergent possibility of a real annulment of capitalist alienation.

Marx now goes on to oppose a materialist theory of objectivity to the idealist theory of the annulment of objectivity. It must be noted right away, and we shall return to it later, that Marx's materialist theory explains both capitalist alienation and its annulment and for that reason is in a position to give a more complete and comprehensive refutation of Hegel's idealism than was Feuerbach. Since Feuerbach had paid no heed to this social problem, he failed to register the valid aspects of the Hegelian theory, and furthermore he fell into the same errors as Hegel himself, though starting from an opposed point of view. The quintessence of Marx's materialist theory of objectivity is as follows:

Whenever real, corporeal *man*, man with his feet firmly on the solid ground, man exhaling and inhaling all the forces of nature, *establishes* his real, objective *essential powers* as alien objects by his externalization, it is not the *act of positing* which is the subject in this process: it is the subjectivity of *objective* essential powers, whose action, therefore, must also be something *objective*. An objective being acts objectively, and he would not act objectively if the objective did not reside in the very nature of his being. He creates or establishes only *objects*, *because* he is established by objects – because at bottom he is *nature*. In the act of establishing, therefore, this objective being does not fall from his state of 'pure activity' into a *creating of the object*: on the contrary, his *objective* product only confirms his *objective* activity, establishing his activity as the activity of an objective, natural being. . . . To *be* objective, natural and sensuous, and at the same time to have object nature and sense outside oneself, or oneself to be object, nature and sense for a third party, is one and the same thing. . . . An unobjective being is a nullity – an *un-being*.²³

Thus Marx's materialist criticism of Hegel's idealism is based on his account of the real premises of human thought and human praxis, as opposed to the alleged absence of premises in absolute idealism. The comparison also exposes the real premises of absolute idealism. In this sense, too, then, materialist dialectics are the truth of objective idealism. They not only annihilate it critically, but also deduce the source of its mistakes and use this discovery to clear the way for its real supersession, i.e. to an annulment which also conserves its essential and valid insights.

By opposing the real premises of philosophy, the real facts of existence (of nature, economics and history) to the mystified premises of objective idealism, and by inferring the correct philosophical conclusions from the accurate dialectical reflection of these facts, Marx reveals that both the 'uncritical idealism' and the 'uncritical positivism' of Hegel are the necessary consequence of his social existence. It then becomes plain 'of its own accord' how and why Hegel was able to work within the framework of these idealist mystifications and to make so many discoveries not just about economics and history but also about the dialectical laws of objective reality in general; it becomes plain, in short, how Hegelian dialectics were able to serve as the immediate prototype of materialist dialectics. The decisive factor, as we have observed, was that Hegel thought of work as the self-creating process of man, of the human species.

It is on the basis of this recognition that Marx formulates his most penetrating criticism, focusing unerringly on the points at which Hegel's insights are distorted by the mystical form in which they appear. We have already quoted Marx's criticism that the course of history is really only an apparent movement in Hegel. Our point then was that the annulment of objectivity in absolute knowledge had the consequence that the Hegelian 'bearer' of history, the absolute spirit, did not really make history as Hegel imagined, but only seemed to do so. Proceeding from the criticism of Hegel's theory of objectivity Marx now mounts a frontal attack on the mystifications in the entire theory of a 'bearer' of history, which is itself the foundation of the idealist mystification of history itself.

This process must have a bearer, a subject. But the subject first emerges as a result. This result – the subject knowing itself as absolute self-consciousness – is therefore *God – absolute spirit – the self-knowing and self-manifesting idea*. Real man and real nature become mere predicates – symbols of this esoteric, unreal man and of this unreal nature. Subject and predicate are therefore related to each other in absolute reversal – a *mystical subject-object* or a *subjectivity reaching beyond the object* – the *absolute subject* as a *process*, as *subject alienating itself* and returning from alienation into itself, but at the same time retracting this alienation into itself, and the subject as this process; a pure *restless* revolving within itself.²⁴

Real history, according to Hegel, is thus made to depend on an abstract, imaginary, mystificatory 'bearer' which, it goes without saying, can only 'make' history in an abstract, imaginary, mystificatory fashion. The real process, the real determinants of the process can only, as it were, sneak in through the back door. The fact that they dominate the particular, concrete stages of history is what creates that contradictory image which we have now analysed at length.

More than a decade later, Marx returns to the same question, no longer in the context of a critique of the *Phenomenology*, but instead as part of a comprehensive assessment of the philosophical foundations of Hegel's idealism as a whole. In the great Introduction to the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* Marx analyses the various complementary and interconnected modes of reflecting, of coming to grips with objective reality, and in the course of his discussion he compares the real, materialist approach with Hegelian illusions:

The concrete concept is concrete because it is a synthesis of many definitions, thus presenting the unity of diverse aspects. It appears, therefore, in reasoning as a summing-up, a result, and not as the starting point, although it is the real point of origin, and thus also the point of origin of perception and imagination. The first procedure attenuates meaningful images to abstract definitions; the second leads from abstract definitions by way of reasoning to the reproduction of the concrete situation. Hegel accordingly conceived the illusory idea that the real world is the result of thinking which causes its own synthesis, its own deepening and its own movement; whereas the method of advancing from the abstract to the concrete is simply the way in which thinking assimilates the concrete and reproduces it as a concrete mental category. This is, however, by no means the process of evolution of the concrete world itself.²⁵

This, then, is Marx's critique of Hegel in its maturest form.

This comprehensive analysis of Hegel's conception of alienation makes it possible for Marx to provide a materialist critique of that other fundamental concept, supersession. Once again, it is important to bear in mind that when Marx subjects idealist dialectics to criticism and transcends it critically, importing its valuable elements into materialist dialectics, he is *exclusively* concerned with idealism in its Hegelian form. Thus in the problem under discussion Marx utterly ignores Schelling's definition of 'supersession': the destruction of the annulled determinations, their annihilation through their elevation into the absolute. Nor does he so much as mention the Kantian variant of agnostic antinomy. Marx regards Hegelian dialectics as the complete and definitive answer to all earlier versions. Accordingly it is with the Hegelian conception that he takes issue, i.e. with that highest form of 'supersession' in which the annulled determinations are not simply negated but also conserved at a higher level, a 'supersession' in which otherness is not annihilated in the absolute but finds its existence and its relative justification respected. Hegel's definition of 'externalization', unlike that of Schelling, has a positive connotation since it creates objectivity, and it is this that Marx takes as his point of departure, taking it as read that the discussions of Hegel

with his predecessors had been resolved in Hegel's favour. Marx goes on to examine the defects of Hegel's version of 'supersession' and comes to this conclusion:

On the other hand, says Hegel, there is here at the same time this other moment, that consciousness has just as much annulled and reabsorbed this externalization and objectivity, being thus *at home* in its *other-being as such*.

In this discussion are brought together all the illusions of speculation.

First of all, consciousness, self-consciousness is *at home in its other being as such*. . . . This implies for one thing that consciousness (knowing as knowing, thinking as thinking) pretends to be directly the other of itself – to be the world of sense, the real world, life. . . . This aspect is contained herein, inasmuch as mere consciousness takes offence not at alienated objectivity, but at *objectivity as such*.

Second, this implies that self-conscious man, in so far as he has recognized and annulled and superseded the spiritual world (or his world's spiritual, general mode of being) as self-alienation, nevertheless again confirms this in its alienated shape and passes it off as his true mode of being – re-establishes it, and pretends to be *at home in his other-being as such*. Thus, for instance, after annulling and superseding religion, after recognizing religion to be a product of self-alienation, he yet finds confirmation of himself in *religion as religion*. Here is the root of Hegel's false positivism, or of his merely apparent criticism: this is what Feuerbach designated as the positing, negating and re-establishing of religion or theology – but it has to be grasped in more general terms. Thus reason is at home in unreason as unreason. The man who has recognized that he is leading an alienated life in politics, law etc. is leading his true human life in this alienated life as such. Self-affirmation, in *contradiction* with itself – in contradiction both with the knowledge of and with the essential being of the object – is thus true *knowledge and life*.

There can therefore no longer be any question of an act of accommodation on Hegel's part *vis-à-vis* religion, the state etc., since this lie is the lie of his principle.²⁶

Here, then, we have the profoundest criticism precisely of Hegel's most positive and significant ideas. Marx exposes the ultimate philosophical implications of Hegel's position *vis-à-vis* capitalist society in so far as these are reflected in the abstract problems arising from the dialectical structure of his philosophy. We have ourselves drawn attention to some of these contradictions and have shown how they have their roots in the society of his age, as well as in his attitude towards it. Now we see the purely philosophical consequences to which these social contradictions

had to lead and did lead in actual fact. Now, too, we can see that all criticism of Hegel's ambiguous stance on problems of religion, the state etc. that was based on a dualism between his esoteric and exoteric philosophy was bound to miss the central problems. This is so regardless of the fact that subjectively, as we saw, Hegel was from time to time not unaware of such a cleavage in his thought; for the contradictions, the problematic nature of his philosophy, reach into the very centre even of his exoteric ideas. Of course, it is and will remain for the student of the history of philosophy to establish where, when and how in particular questions Hegel made any concessions to the society of his day. But any such historical analysis must make it quite clear that whatever answers it comes up with will not touch the central issue of the problematic nature of the Hegelian dialectic.²⁷

The profundity of Marx's criticism is apparent from the way in which it moves from the problems of actual life to the most abstract questions of the Hegelian dialectics, solves them finally in terms of dialectical materialism and then moves on at once, finding an immediate connection with the problems of real life. What we are concerned with here is the central problem of the whole philosophy of Hegel, what Engels called the contradiction between method and system.

This contradiction embraces further contradictory attitudes on the question of human progress and, specifically, on the question of the position of capitalism in history in general, and in German history in particular. The question of supersession is on the one hand one of the ultimate and most abstract components of the dialectic, but on the other hand it is of the greatest importance for his philosophy of history and society. The mixture of progressive and reactionary tendencies in Hegel crystallizes out in the contradictions contained in the dialectical process of supersession, contradictions which have been analysed and criticized by Marx in the passages just quoted.

The socialist critique of 'externalization' has exposed the real alienation contained in the capitalist form of work, an alienation that has to be annulled in reality. Expressing this critique in general philosophical terms, we see that since the Hegelian concept of 'externalization' implies that consciousness is at home in its other-being as such, it *eo ipso* contains an important reactionary element, a vindication of what exists even if it has been overcome historically. The fact that Hegel also exhibits the opposite tendency and repeatedly follows it up simply confirms the accuracy of Marx's and Engels' diagnosis of an indissoluble contradiction between system and method.

This contradiction and the tendencies contained within it played a crucial role in the great ideological debates of the 1840s which prepared the ground for democratic revolution. What we find there are two different interpretations of Hegel's views, both of which lead to political

passivity, to the non-comprehension of the concrete problems of the democratic revolution and beyond that – in theory – of revolution in general. The general significance of these problems far exceeds the importance of the debates of the 1840s, for the misconceptions we are concerned with are rooted in capitalism, and it is only their intellectual form that is determined by the arguments surrounding Hegel's view of dialectical supersession. The first of these views is the direct continuation of Hegelian idealism; it involves the further subjectivization, the exaggeration of Hegel's idealistic misconceptions by the Young Hegelians. The other tendency arises from the epistemologically correct but abstract and one-sided critique of Hegel's supersession by Feuerbach himself.

Let us begin with the first position. Since, according to Hegel, 'externalization' is ultimately the 'externalization' of consciousness, it ought to be superseded *exclusively* by consciousness, *within* consciousness. In Hegel himself the identity of absolute knowledge and the philosopher who possesses it remained in the half-light. His objectivism prevented him from making this identity into a simple personal union. But the tendency was nevertheless implicit in his position. Once again it was Heinrich Heine who with irony and self-irony took the matter to its logical conclusion:

I was never an abstract thinker and I accepted the synthesis of Hegel's doctrine without questioning it, since its consequences flattered my conceit. I was young and proud and it pleased my vanity when I learned from Hegel that the God residing in Heaven was not God, as my grandmother imagined, but that I, living here on earth, was he.²⁸

What Heine said ironically was taken up in Bruno Bauer's *Philosophy of Self-Consciousness* and turned into a philosophical and political doctrine which exercised a dangerous and pernicious influence on the left-wing German intelligentsia, as well as on the emergent proletarian party (via the detour of 'True Socialism').

If we examine Marx's penetrating criticism of Bauer's view in *The Holy Family*, we can see how it grows directly out of his criticism of Hegel's view of 'supersession'. We should note, however, that Bauer's intellectual arrogance, his overweening contempt for the action of the masses in history is something that has grown out of Hegel's philosophy and his view of history, but it appears in Bauer without Hegel's important progressive and realistic tendencies and instead it takes Hegel's idealism to an extreme of subjectivity. Marx discusses Bauer's view in these terms:

The enemies of progress *outside* the mass are precisely those *products* of *self-debasement*, *self-rejection* and *self-alienation* of the *mass* which have been endowed with independent being and a life of their *own*. The mass therefore rises against its own deficiency when it rises against

the independently existing *products* of its *self-debasement* just as man, turning against the existence of God, turns against his *own religiosity*. But as those practical self-alienations of the mass exist in the real world in an external way, the mass must fight them in an *external* way. It must by no means consider these products of its self-alienation as mere *ideal* fancies, mere *externalizations of self-consciousness*, and must not wish to abolish *material* alienation by a purely *inward spiritual* action. As early as 1789 Loustalot's journal gave the motto:

The great appear great in our eyes
Only because we kneel.
Let us rise!

But to rise is not enough to do so *in thought* and to leave hanging over our *real sensual* head the *real palpable* yoke that cannot be subtilized away with ideas. Yet Absolute Criticism has at least learned from Hegel's *Phenomenology* the art of changing *real objective* chains that exist *outside me* into *mere ideal*, mere *subjective* chains existing *in me*, and thus to change all *exterior* palpable struggles into pure struggles of thought.²⁹

It is not necessary to provide further evidence in support of the proposition that Bauer's ideology grows out of Hegel's 'externalization' and its supersession. Nor of the political danger inherent in such views, to say nothing of the persistence of the ideology of passivity among an arrogant intelligentsia in capitalist societies, an ideology which endures to this day, though of course it has long ceased to base itself on Hegelian philosophy. But Hegelianism does lend itself to such use, as we can see not just from the history of the 1840s but also – and in particularly extreme and grotesque forms – in the neo-Hegelianism of the Imperialist age.

To turn to the second form, viz. Feuerbach's critique of the Hegelian dialectic, it is important to consider Marx's attitude. Marx thinks that what was important and original in Feuerbach's analysis was that he showed how Hegel's supersession in fact entailed the reinstatement of what had been superseded. We have already quoted the crucial passage from his critique in another context. Marx praised Feuerbach for proving that Hegel's philosophy amounted to a reinstatement of religion. Furthermore, he admired Feuerbach's advance to a true materialism and, lastly, his critique of supersession, of the negation of negation. We shall confine ourselves to this latter point. Feuerbach was right

in opposing to the negation of the negation, which claims to be the absolute positive, the self-supporting positive, positively based on itself.³⁰

This positive represents the priority of existence over consciousness. According to Feuerbach the process of supersession in Hegel's dialectic inverts the relation of existence to consciousness. He goes on to show how this idealist inversion leads to the reinstatement of religion by philosophy. Marx summarizes Feuerbach's position in this way:

Feuerbach thus conceives the negation of the negation *only* as a contradiction of philosophy with itself – as the philosophy which affirms theology (the transcendental etc.) after having denied it and which it therefore affirms in opposition to itself.³¹

Marx accepts this, the materialist side of Feuerbach's criticism, but he immediately qualifies his praise by pointing out its one-sidedness. This consists, on the one hand, in the fact that Feuerbach treats 'externalization' purely as a philosophical problem so that he too sticks fast in abstraction (cf. Marx's and Engels' later criticism of the abstractness of Feuerbach's 'man'). On the other hand, Feuerbach's materialist view of reality is not dialectical so that he overlooks Hegel's real insights because of their idealist form and so rejects the whole of Hegel's dialectic, the good along with the bad. Thus as Marx emphasizes in the last quotation, Feuerbach can only see the weaknesses of Hegel's idealism in the negation of the negation, 'which he directly and immediately confronts with the position of sense-certainty based on itself'.

Feuerbach's self-imposed restriction to epistemology is the source of his abstractness; the direct, conscious exclusion of all mediations does away with Hegel's dialectics as well as his idealism. This is why Feuerbach ignores the most important and crucial determinations of Hegel's philosophy. Marx adds:

But because Hegel has conceived the negation of the negation, from the point of view of the positive relation inherent in it, as the true and only positive, and from the point of view of the negative relation inherent in it as the only true act and self-realizing act of all being, he has only found the *abstract, logical, speculative* expression for the movement of history; which is not yet the *real* history of man – of man as a given subject, but only man's *act of creation* – the story of man's origin.³²

Thus the socialist criticism of capitalism discerns in Hegel's *Phenomenology* some of the essential and correct definitions of the process that Marx was later to call the 'pre-history' of mankind. Feuerbach, however, is no less imprisoned within the horizon of the bourgeoisie than Hegel, albeit from a very different standpoint, and so he can only deal with Hegel's thought in terms of an absolute Either/Or. In his account of the

Phenomenology, Marx refers to a number of passages where Hegel correctly understood certain specific features of the 'pre-history' of mankind. And he shows, further, that although the concepts of alienation and supersession are distorted by idealism and given a reactionary colouring in Hegel, they are not utterly false, as Feuerbach believed, but are a one-sided reflection of reality, deformed and inhibited by the capitalist perspective, whose correct intuitions, however, were worthy of preservation:

The *Phenomenology* is, therefore, a hidden and mystifying criticism – still to itself obscure; but inasmuch as it grasps steadily man's *alienation*, even though man only appears in the shape of mind, there lie concealed in it *all* the elements of criticism, already *prepared* and *elaborated* in a manner often rising far above the Hegelian standpoint. The Unhappy Consciousness, the Honest Consciousness, the struggle of the Noble and Base Consciousness etc. etc. – these separate sections contain, but as yet in an alienated form, the *critical* elements of whole spheres such as religion, the state, civil life etc.³³

Thus Marx's really comprehensive criticism of Hegel's dialectic grows into a criticism of Feuerbach's one-sided and myopic judgment of Hegel, and that leads to a criticism of Feuerbach's metaphysical materialism and of his rejection of dialectics. The point of interest to us is that in the debates of the 1840s the Feuerbachian critique of Hegel's idealism had very dangerous political repercussions. For although Feuerbach's critique of the negation of the negation is based on the immediate sensuousness of material life, he is unable to grasp the dialectical movement within that material life. As Marx points out in the *Theses on Feuerbach*, he is unable to comprehend sensuousness in its practical implications.

The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism (that of Feuerbach included) is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the *object or of contemplation*, but not as *sensuous human activity, practice*, not subjectively. Hence, in contradistinction to materialism, the *active* side was developed abstractly by idealism – which, of course, does not know real, sensuous activity as such. Feuerbach wants sensuous objects, really distinct from the thought objects, but he does not conceive human activity itself as *objective* activity. Hence, in *Das Wesen des Christentums*, he regards the theoretical attitude as the only genuine human attitude, while practice is conceived and fixed only in its dirty-Jewish manifestation. Hence he does not grasp the significance of 'revolutionary', of 'practical-critical' activity.²³

This makes it very clear that the analysis of economic concepts, the

precise distinction between objectivity and alienation in human praxis prepared the ground for a critique not only of Hegel's idealism but also of Feuerbach's mechanical materialism.

It is important to give a brief account of the implications of Feuerbach's position in the ideological and political struggles of the 1840s. Engels has provided a clear definition (and trenchant criticism) of the crucial aspect of Feuerbach's stance *vis-à-vis* the real world. He quotes the following passage from Feuerbach's *Philosophy of the Future*:

Existence is not a general concept which can be separated from things. . . . Existence is the positing of essence. *My essence is my existence.* . . . Even language identifies existence and essence. Only in human life is existence divorced from essence – *but only in exceptional, unhappy cases*; it happens that a person's essence is not in the place where he exists, but just because of this division his soul is not truly in the place where the body really is. *You are* there only where your heart is! But all things – *apart from abnormal cases* – are glad to be in the place where they are, and are glad to be what they are.³⁵

Engels then delivers the following scathing commentary on this passage, drawing out the necessary political implications, implications certainly unwelcome to Feuerbach, who subjectively was a sincere revolutionary democrat, but which flow inevitably from his liquidation of the Hegelian dialectic, from the elimination of all mediating determinations and relations, from his return to immediacy – all of which reflects the fact that he was unable to overcome his built-in preconceptions and look the economic and social realities of capitalism squarely in the face. Objectively, as Engels shows, his blindness on this score could have the effect of turning him into apologist for reactionary conditions.

A fine panegyric upon the existing state of things. Exceptional cases and a few abnormal cases apart, when you are seven years old you are glad to become a door-keeper in a coal-mine and to remain alone in the dark for fourteen hours a day, and because it is your existence, therefore it is also your essence. . . . It is your 'essence' to be subservient to a branch of labour.³⁶

Engels' criticism helps to explain why the radical and sometimes even socialist intellectuals of the 1840s who looked to Feuerbach to provide them with a philosophical foundation for their political radicalism were as unsuccessful as those who attempted to use Hegel for the same purposes. A close examination of Feuerbach's position would reveal that such conscious or unconscious apologias for the existing order of things on the basis of the immediate philosophical identity of existence and

essence have – *mutatis mutandis* – continued to play a part in the defence of reactionary conditions and still do so today long after Feuerbach and quite independently of him.

It was necessary to point to the political consequences of the ideological conflicts of the 1840s to make it clear how Marx's criticism of Hegel's idealist dialectics grows out of the socialist critique of capitalism and into the preparatory phase of the 1848 Revolution, and beyond that to all the democratic and proletarian revolutions of the future. The internal movement of Marx's criticism shows how wrong it would be to consider these problems purely as problems of philosophy even in Hegel. Not the least of Feuerbach's defects is that his approach to Hegel was confined to the purely epistemological and philosophical plane while the dialectical interaction of such problems with the problems of society, of man's social and economic praxis, were as good as non-existent for him. The superiority of Hegel's philosophy over Feuerbach's (in a certain sense, in certain areas) – despite his idealism – is precisely that Hegel did strive, if often in vain, to make these connections the basis of his dialectics. It is for this reason that his dialectics is a watershed in the history of philosophy: it is the highest form of idealist dialectics and so of bourgeois philosophy in general, and hence it is the mediating link capable of forming a *direct* connection with dialectical materialism.

Lenin was not able to consult the Marxian Manuscripts which we have now discussed at length and so could not know of the connections established there between economics and dialectics in the course of his critique of Hegel. Nevertheless, he had a clear view of what these connections entailed. We have already quoted his comment that there was a *direct* link between Marx and Hegel. His remark insists on a point that was wholly neglected during the period of the Second International even though Marx and Engels lost no opportunity – in prefaces, comments and letters etc. – to draw attention to the importance of Hegel and to urge the study of his philosophy as an indispensable prerequisite for the understanding of dialectical materialism. These exhortations were utterly ignored by the most important and honest theoreticians of the period. Not even Plekhanov, who, unlike Mehring and Lafargue, had made an intensive study of Hegel, had the least idea of the connections, the profound methodological links between economics and dialectics.

Following Marx, Lenin was the first to re-establish them. It would be a gross over-simplification to imagine that Lenin's critical commentary of Hegel's *Logic* should be confined to epistemology in the narrower sense. Even when he is talking about problems of knowledge Lenin is always concerned, as we saw in his remarks on teleology, with the great, universal perspectives of Marxism. In his critical comments on Hegel, therefore, he continually returns to this decisive question.

We shall illustrate this briefly confining ourselves to a few of Lenin's most important statements:

It is impossible completely to understand Marx's *Capital*, and especially its first chapter, without having thoroughly studied and understood the *whole* of Hegel's *Logic*. Consequently, half a century later none of the Marxists understood Marx!!³⁷

And elsewhere:

If Marx did not leave behind him a *Logic* (with a capital letter), he did leave the *logic* of *Capital*, and this ought to be utilized to the full in this question [i.e. the question of dialectics – G.L.]. In *Capital*, Marx applied to a single science logic, dialectics and the theory of knowledge of materialism (three words are not needed: it is one and the same thing) which has taken everything valuable in Hegel and developed it further.³⁸

These comments are to be found, characteristically enough, in the midst of Lenin's analysis of the plan of Hegel's dialectics, and they are followed, no less characteristically, by his observations on Marx's dialectical application of the categories of economics in *Capital*. Lenin thus demonstrates, as Marx had done before him, how philosophical problems are to be tackled and solved in dialectical materialism. The 'Lenin period' of philosophical development initiated by Stalin ought to extend these methods to every aspect of philosophy so that philosophical praxis will finally be able to eradicate the traditions of the Second International.

The 'Lenin period' of philosophy must also devote itself to the problems of history, it goes without saying. The present study was designed to make a contribution to this aspect. It aimed to explore the impact of the contradictions of capitalist society in the highest expression of bourgeois philosophy, on Hegel's idealist dialectics. We hoped to show this connection in all its social and philosophical complexity, and in particular to reveal how the origins and development of the dialectic were influenced by the intellectual reflection of these contradictions in the classical economic theory of England and by their actual explosion in the French Revolution. Moreover, we have been concerned to show the effects – for good and evil – that resulted from the circumstance that these French and English events, both real and ideological, were brought together into a dialectical method and an idealist system in the mind of a man living in the socially and economically backward nation of Germany.

Only this approach has enabled us to treat the relation between Hegel and his predecessors in a manner that could dispense with the schematic method, the violations and factual distortions current in bourgeois histor-

ies of philosophy, traces of which are not uncommon in the treatment of such questions by Marxists. We believe that we have been able to show that both Hegel's independence of his important contemporaries and forerunners and also his involuntary agreement with them are to be explained in terms of these problems of the nature of society.

This is not merely an historical question, not merely an issue of importance to the so-called Hegel scholars (even though they have become important and topical in consequence of the recent Fascist and Fascistoid distortions of history). An understanding of the real causes of the greatness and the limitations of the Hegelian dialectic also results in the clarification of the relation of Marx to Hegel, and the concretization of the historical heritage of Hegelianism as critically sifted and preserved in Marxism. For if one thing is clear, it is that Marx was always concerned with the *real* Hegel. In the midst of his polemics he always makes a clear distinction between Hegel with all his limitations, and whatever his disciples and followers have made of him. Between Marx's criticism and our age there lies almost a century whose 'achievement' in this respect consists in the distortion of our image of the real Hegel, a distortion which up to now has not been made good in any Marxist study of Hegel or any attempt to excavate the real Hegel from the rubble. The ideas with which even the majority of philosophically educated readers approach Hegel are, even without their knowing it, profoundly influenced by these bourgeois falsifications. And the far-reaching implications of the critical comments of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin can only be properly understood and utilized if we know the *real* object of their criticism, i.e. if we know the *real* Hegel.

Only in the context of this situation can the *philosophical* significance of Hegel's economic studies and ideas become fully apparent. Contradictory and imperfect though Hegel's views may have been, and we have analysed the contradictions inherent in them at length, it is undoubtedly no accident that the man who completed the edifice of idealist dialectics was the *only* philosopher of the age to have made a *serious* attempt to get to grips with the economic structure of capitalist society. Rather is it the case that the *specific* form of dialectics evolved by him grew out of his preoccupation with the problems of capitalism and of economics.

We repeat: the mere form of a unity of opposites, of contradictions, can be found everywhere in the modern era from Nicholas of Cusa and Giordano Bruno onwards. But as far as the *decisive* questions of dialectics are concerned, even Schelling's philosophy, the most highly developed philosophy of dialectics before Hegel, does not really advance matters further than they. The specifically Hegelian categories, whose emergence and problematic nature we have studied, were the first to elaborate the essential determinations to the point where the materialist dialectics of Marx could take over – criticizing Hegel and turning him the right way

up, but nevertheless taking up *directly* where he had left off. The unique importance of Marx's critique of Hegel consists in the fact that it locates the achievement and the limitations of his dialectics in the accuracy and the defects of his grasp of the contradictions and the laws of motion of capitalist society and its economics.

Only from this vantage-point can Hegel's historical achievement be seen for what it is. Every thinker is, as Hegel remarks, the child of his age; as such he takes up where his predecessors left off. But if we wish to establish the greatness and the achievement of a thinker, we must inquire how far he was dependent on his predecessors for the methods and the substance of his thought and how far he was able to test them against reality and develop them further, in short, we must determine to what extent his thought is based on reality and to what extent he remains bound by the philosophical traditions and horizons of his predecessors.

This is the qualitative distinction between Fichte and Schelling on the one hand and Hegel on the other (to say nothing of the lesser thinkers of the age, who, however, are themselves real giants when put by the side of the so-called 'great' minds of contemporary bourgeois philosophy). Obviously, the philosophies of Fichte and Schelling were determined by objective social reality, both in their assumptions and in their general lines. Philosophically speaking, however, they remain imprisoned within the framework of Kantianism, and even though Schelling, for instance, takes the step from subjective to objective idealism, he remains unable to break out of that framework; all he can do is try new combinations within it, and although he declares his intentions of going beyond Kant, his real advance is proclaimed and asserted rather than genuinely realized in philosophical terms.

Hegel is the only philosopher of the period following Kant to make a truly original approach to the problems of the age. We have explored his early beginnings in detail and have seen how all the problems of dialectics grew out of his reflections on the two great world-historical facts of the age: the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution in England. Only in the course of the concrete elaboration of his system did Hegel begin to take issue with his predecessors. Moreover, right from the start, his preoccupation with them was critical, bursting the framework of the Kantian system. Similarities with his forerunners can be found only occasionally, where the social condition of Germany forced his thought into narrow-minded and even philistine channels.

Historically, only one figure may be placed on a par with Hegel: Goethe. It is not just a coincidence that the preparatory stages of the *Phenomenology* provide evidence of a long and detailed preoccupation with Goethe's *Faust*. Both works express a similar aspiration: to provide an encyclopaedic account of the development of mankind to the point reached in the present, and to portray that development in its immanent

movement, in terms of its own laws. It was not for nothing that Pushkin referred to *Faust* as an 'Iliad of the modern world', and Schelling's witty description of his philosophy of spirit as the homecoming of spirit, as an 'Odyssey of the spirit', is an epithet better applied to the *Phenomenology* than to any work of Schelling's.

Goethe and Hegel lived at the beginning of the last great tragic period of bourgeois development. Both could see the insoluble contradictions of bourgeois society opening up on the horizon; both could see how history was creating an abyss between the individual and the species. Their greatness lay, on the one hand, in their fearless confrontation of these contradictions and in their efforts to express them at the highest level of philosophy or poetry. On the other hand, they both lived at the beginning of the period, so that both were able – though not always without artificiality or inconsistency – to create lasting images of the generic experience of mankind and the development of man's generic consciousness, images which were comprehensive and large in scope, yet penetrating and true in detail. In this respect, *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust* are documents of man's development which are just as immortal as the *Phenomenology*, the *Logic* and the *Encyclopaedia*. Of course, these profound affinities should not blind us to their differences: Goethe was much more at home in nature than was Hegel; he was closer to materialism; but equally he was unable to respond to some of Hegel's most important dialectical discoveries. A detailed history of the epoch would have to deal fully with these differences. They are of the greatest importance, since only when they have been clarified will it be possible to obtain a really clear picture of the internal contradictions in the progressive currents of the period.

For our purposes, however, it is enough to establish the parallel between the two men. We do not need to chart in detail the complex dialectic that made Goethe's treatment of the problems of capitalist society partly more realistic and perceptive about the future, partly less dialectical and less sensitive to contradictions than Hegel's. It is enough for us to point out that fundamental to them both was the principle of human labour as the key to the self-creation of man. This idea appears as early as the Prometheus Fragment of the young Goethe, though not yet in a consciously economic form and – revealingly, from the point of view of the differences between Goethe and Hegel – with a marked anti-religious bias. In Goethe's greatest works, however, the self-creation of man through work is closely connected with the relation of man to capitalist society and ends in a humanist critique of capitalism. This critique does not lose sight of the idea of human progress for a single instant and so prefers to move 'amidst the manure of the contradictions' than to make concessions to any reactionary romanticism. It would be ridiculous and pedantic to attempt to draw any mechanical parallels between Goethe's literary works and the philosophy of Hegel. But the

road on which Goethe discovers his *Faust* or *Wilhelm Meister* is, broadly speaking, the same as that of the spirit in Hegel's *Phenomenology*.³⁹

Notes

1. For the first meaning see *Die Grundlagen der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*, 1794, *Werke*, Stuttgart and Augsburg, 1858, Vol. I, p. 360; for the second see *Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre*, 1801, *Werke*, Vol. IV, p. 73.
2. *Werke*, Vol. I, p. 166.
3. *Theories of Surplus Value*, Vol. III, London, 1972, p. 267.
4. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J.B. Baillie, London, 1964, p. 96.
5. Engels, *Feuerbach*, in *Selected Works*, Moscow and London, 1950, Vol. II, p. 336.
6. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 807.
7. *ibid.*, p. 807.
8. *Jena Logic*, ed. G. Lasson, Leipzig, 1923, pp. 320ff.
9. Rosenkranz, *Life of Hegel*, Berlin, 1844, p. 187.
10. *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, Moscow, n.d., p. 76.
11. *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow and London, 1962, p. 372.
12. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 801.
13. *ibid.*, p. 808. The verse at the end is a free adaptation of the concluding lines of Schiller's poem *Friendship* and also the poem *God* from the *Philosophical Letters*.
14. *The Holy Family*, Moscow and London, 1956, pp. 115–16.
15. On what follows see my study: 'Zur philosophischen Entwicklung des jungen Marx', in *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, No. 2/II/1954.
16. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, trans. M. Milligan, London, 1970, p. 108.
17. *ibid.*, pp. 110–11.
18. *ibid.*, pp. 112–13.
19. *ibid.*, p. 174.
20. *ibid.*, pp. 178–9.
21. *ibid.*, p. 175.
22. *ibid.*, p. 178.
23. *ibid.*, pp. 180–2.
24. *ibid.*, p. 188.
25. *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, London, 1971, p. 206.
26. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, pp. 184–5.
27. In my article 'Zur philosophischen Entwicklung des jungen Marx', *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, No. 2/II/1954, I have shown that Marx consistently rejected the Young-Hegelian distinction between Hegel's esoteric and exoteric line from his *Dissertation* on, and that he regarded attempts to explain away the exoteric line in terms of an accommodation to society as superficial.
28. *Werke*, ed. Elster, Vol. VI, p. 48.
29. *The Holy Family*, p. 111.
30. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, p. 172.
31. *ibid.*, p. 172.
32. *ibid.*, p. 173.
33. *ibid.*, p. 176.
34. *The German Ideology*, London, 1965, p. 659.

35. *Werke*, Vol. II, p. 311.
36. *The German Ideology*, p. 675.
37. Lenin, *Philosophical Notebooks*, Collected Works, Moscow and London, 1961, p. 180.
38. *ibid.*, p. 319.
39. I have discussed the parallels between *Faust* and the *Phenomenology* at length in my book, *Goethe and his Age*, London, 1968, pp. 157–255.

Marx's relation to Hegel (1968)

Louis Althusser

I should like to thank Monsieur Jean Hyppolite for the great honour he has done me in inviting me to his Seminar. I am greatly indebted to M. Hyppolite. Among many other achievements, he will go down in the history of French philosophy as the man who has had the courage to translate Hegel and sponsor the publication of Husserl. He has pulled French philosophy away from the reactionary tradition which has dominated, I say *dominated* (for fortunately there have been other elements beneath this domination), its whole history since the French Revolution, a reactionary tradition reinforced by the academic reigns of Lachelier, Bergson and Brunschvicg. In this tradition French chauvinism took the form of the simplest kind of stupidity: ignorance. M. Hyppolite has had the courage to fight against this ignorance. We owe to him our knowledge of Hegel, and through Hegel, the beginnings of an understanding of, among other things, the distance separating Marx from Hegel. Let us not speak of the fate French philosophy has reserved for Marx. Brunschvicg, who thought Hegel mentally retarded, regarded Marx and Lenin as philosophical nonentities. M. Hyppolite has also had the courage to speak of Marx, and of Freud, those great *damnés de la terre* for academic bourgeois philosophy.

Everyone more or less knows this now. But it is worth saying.

Let me add that I have a debt to M. Hyppolite that he will not suspect. If I have been able to glimpse the revolutionary theoretical scope of Marx's work in philosophy, it is thanks to a very dear friend, Jacques Martin, who died five years ago. Now Jacques Martin was privileged, under the Occupation in Paris, to hear M. Hyppolite, then a *professeur de khâgne* (teacher in Letters in the preparatory class for the Ecole Normale Supérieure), comment on certain passages from the *Phenomenology of Mind*. From what I know of it, these were not, believe me, in that very special period, ordinary commentaries. What M. Hyppolite said

then helped several of his students to orientate themselves 'in thought', as Kant put it, i.e. also in politics. M. Hyppolite has certainly forgotten the words he then uttered: but not everyone has forgotten them. I am here to bear witness. Against what common sense, the common sense of financiers and lawyers, tells us, there are many writings that blow away, but a few words that remain. No doubt because they have been inscribed in life and history.

I should like to put forward a few schematic themes about Marx's relation to Hegel.

I renounce rhetoric and maieutics, whether Socratic or phenomenological. In philosophy, the true beginning is the end. I shall begin at the end. I shall lay my cards on the table so everyone can see them. These cards are what they are: they carry the stamp of *Marxism-Leninism*. Exposed in this way, they will naturally have the form of a conclusion without premises.

Let me start with a fact. The Marx-Hegel relationship is a currently decisive theoretical and political question. A *theoretical* question: it governs the future of the number-one strategic science of modern times: the science of history, and the future of the philosophy linked to that science: dialectical materialism. A *political* question: it derives from these premises. It is inscribed in the class struggle at a certain level, in the past as in the present.

To understand the contemporary importance of this fact of the Marx-Hegel relationship, it must be understood as a symptom, and explained as the symptom of the following realities. In order to situate the symptom, I shall state these realities in the form of *Theses*.

Thesis I (a statement of fact). *The union, or fusion of the Workers' Movement and Marxist theory* is the greatest event in the history of class societies, i.e. practically in all human history. Beside it, the celebrated great scientific-technical 'mutation' constantly resounding in our ears (the atomic, electronic, computer era, the space-age etc) is, despite its great importance, no more than a scientific and technical fact: these events are not of the same order of magnitude; they only bear in their effects on certain aspects of the productive forces, and not on what is decisive, the *relations of production*.

We are living in the necessary effects of this fusion, of this union. Its first results: the socialist revolutions (USSR, China etc., revolutionary movements in Asia, Vietnam, Latin America, Communist Parties etc.).

(a) This union realizes the 'union of theory and practice'.

(b) This union is not an established fact but an endless struggle, with its victories and defeats. A struggle in the union itself. With the 1914

War: the crisis of the Second International. At present: the crisis in the International Communist Movement.

The union brings together: the Workers' Movement and Marxist theory. Here I shall only discuss Marxist theory. What is Marxist theory?

Thesis 2 (a statement of fact). Marxist theory includes a science and a philosophy.

In the great classical tradition of the Workers' Movement, from Marx to Lenin, Stalin and Mao, Marxist theory has been defined as containing two distinct theoretical disciplines: a *science* (designated by its general theory: historical materialism) and a philosophy (designated by the term 'dialectical materialism'). There are very special relations between these two disciplines. I shall not examine them in this paper. I shall suggest the following: of these two disciplines, science and philosophy, it is the science that has the place of determination (in the sense defined in *Reading Capital* and closely specified by Badiou in *Critique*, May 1967.¹) *Everything depends on this science.*

Thesis 3. Marx founded a new science: the *science of the history* of social formations, or the science of history.

The foundation of the science of history by Marx is the most important theoretical event of contemporary history.

Let me use an image.

There are a certain number of sciences. They can be said to occupy a certain site in what can be called a theoretical space. Site, space. Metaphorical notions. But they convey certain facts: the proximity of certain sciences; relations between neighbouring sciences; domination of certain sciences over other sciences; but simultaneously sciences without neighbours, insular sciences (isolated positions in a void: for example psychoanalysis, etc.).

From this standpoint it is possible to consider that the history of the sciences reveals the existence, in this problematical theoretical space, of *great scientific continents*.

1. The continent of mathematics (opened up by the Greeks).
2. The continent of physics (opened up by Galileo).
3. Marx has opened up the third great continent: the continent of history.

A continent, in the sense of this metaphor, is never empty: it is always already 'occupied' by many and varied more or less ideological disciplines which do not know that they belong to that 'continent'. For example, before Marx, the history continent was occupied by the philosophies of history, by political economy etc. The opening-up of a continent by a continental science not only disputes the rights and claims of the former occupants; it also completely restructures the old configuration of the 'continent'. A metaphor cannot be spun out indefinitely – otherwise I

should here say that the opening-up of a new continent to scientific knowledge presupposes a *change of terrain* or an *epistemological* 'rupture' etc. I leave you the trouble of the temporary needlework required to bring all these metaphors into agreement. But one day we shall have to drop all this sewing and patching for something quite different: to make a theory of the history of the production of knowledges.

Thesis 4. Every great scientific discovery induces a great transformation in philosophy. The scientific discoveries which open up the great scientific continents constitute the major dates in the *periodization* of the history of philosophy:

1st continent (mathematics): birth of philosophy. Plato.

2nd continent (physics): profound transformation of philosophy. Descartes.

3rd great continent (history, Marx): revolution in philosophy, announced in the 11th Thesis on Feuerbach. End of classical philosophy, no longer an interpretation of the world, but a '*transformation*' of the world.

'Transformation of the world': an enigmatic word, prophetic but enigmatic. How can philosophy be a transformation of the world? Of which world?

Whatever the case, it is possible to say, with Hegel: philosophy always arrives *post festum*. It is always *late*. It is always *postponed* (*différée*).

This thesis is very important to me: in a certain respect (its theoretical elaboration), Marxist philosophy or dialectical materialism *cannot but be behind the science of history*. Time is needed for a philosophy to form and then develop after the great scientific discovery which has silently induced its birth.

All the more so in that, in Marx's case, the scientificity of his discovery has been fiercely denied, fought and condemned by all the self-styled specialists of that continent. The so-called human sciences still occupy the old continent. They are now armed with the latest ultra-modern techniques of mathematics etc., but they are still based theoretically on the same outworn ideological notions as they were in the past, ingeniously rethought and retouched. With a few remarkable exceptions, the prodigious development of the so-called human sciences, above all the development of the social sciences, is no more than the *aggiornamento* of old techniques of social adaptation and social readaptation: of *ideological* techniques. This is the great scandal of the whole of contemporary intellectual history: everyone talks about Marx; almost everyone in the human or social sciences says he is more or less a Marxist. But who has taken the trouble to read Marx closely, to understand his novelty and take the theoretical consequences? Without exception, the specialists of the human sciences one hundred years after Marx work with outdated ideological notions like Aristotelian physicists carrying on with Aristotelian physics

fifty years after Galileo. Where are the philosophers who do not take Engels and Lenin for philosophical nonentities? I believe they can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Not all Communist philosophers even, far from it, think well of Engels and Lenin as 'philosophers'. Where are the philosophers who have studied the history of the Workers' Movement, the history of the 1917 Revolution and the Chinese Revolution? Marx and Lenin have the great honour to share the fate of intellectual pariah with Freud and to be travestied when they are discussed as he is travestied. This scandal is not a scandal: the relations that reign between philosophical ideas are what are called relations of forces, ideological, and therefore political relations of forces. But it is bourgeois philosophical ideas that are in power. The question of power is the number-one question in philosophy, too. Philosophy is indeed in the last instance *political*.

Thesis 5. How is Marx's scientific discovery to be explained?

If we take seriously what Marx tells us about the real dialectic of history, it is not 'men' who make history, although its dialectic is realized in them and in their practice, but the masses in the relations of the class struggle. This is true for political history, general history. For the history of the sciences, making due allowances, the same is true. It is not individuals who make the history of the sciences, although its dialectic is realized in them, and in their practice. The empirical individuals known for making such and such a discovery realize in their practice *relations* and a *conjunction* wider than themselves.

This is where we can pose the problem of the relations between Marx and Hegel.

I shall give an extraordinarily schematic figuration. I hope it will be

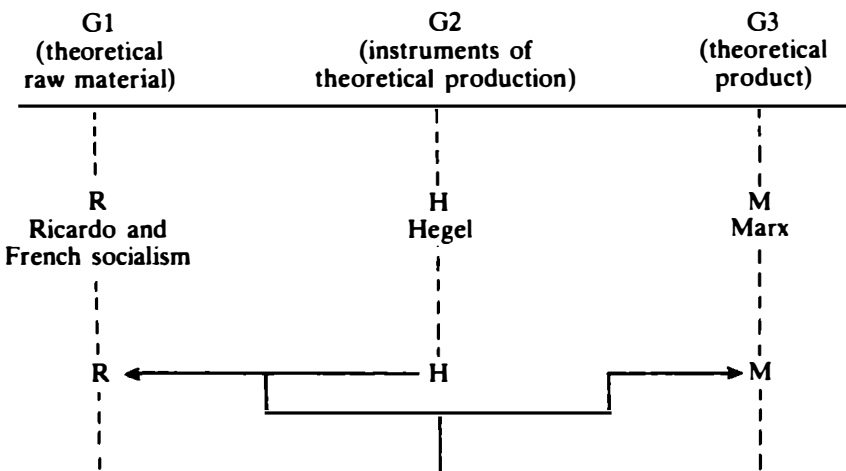


Figure 1

taken only for what it is: the index of a problem, and the indication of the schematic conditions for it to be *posed*.

To pose it thus in outline, I shall start once again from an indication of Engels', taken up and developed by Lenin and known by the name of the Three Sources of Marxism. *Sources* is an outdated ideological notion, but what matters to us is the fact that Engels and Lenin do not pose the problem in terms of an individual history, but in terms of a *history of theories*. They establish a pattern involving three theoretical 'characters': classical German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism. Say: Hegel, Ricardo and Babeuf-Fourier, Saint-Simon etc. To simplify and for expositional clarity, I shall partially set aside French socialism and consider only Ricardo and Hegel, as symbolic representatives of English political economy and German philosophy respectively.

I shall then return to the *extremely* general diagram of 'theoretical practice' which I proposed five years ago in an article on the *materialist dialectic*.

Which means very schematically that Marx (*Capital*) is the product of the work of Hegel (German philosophy) on English political economy + French socialism, in other words, the *Hegelian dialectic* on: *labour theory of value* (R) + *the class struggle* (FS).

R + FS = raw material, object of Marx's theoretical practice
H = instruments of theoretical production,
the product of the work of the Hegelian dialectic on Ricardo is then *Capital* = M.

[What we tried to do in *Reading Capital* can be represented, in thoroughly indicative fashion, by Figure 2.

We took as our raw material the *Marx-Hegel* relationship (G'I). We

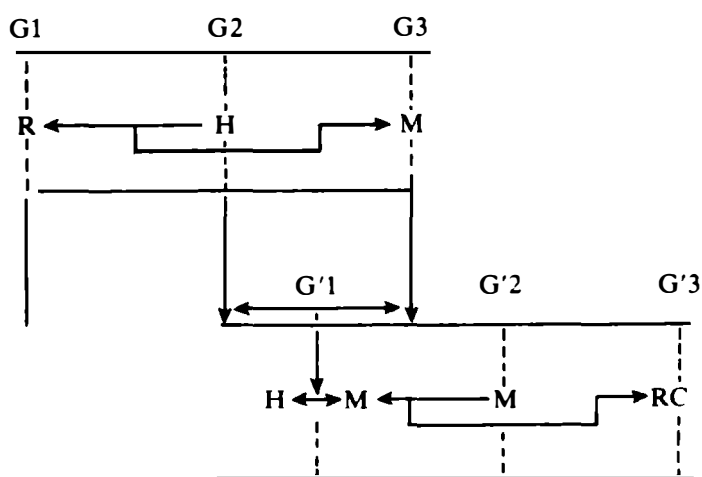


Figure 2

set to 'work' on this raw material means of theoretical production G'2 (Marx himself + certain other categories) to produce a result G'3: whatever *Reading Capital* contains that is not aberrant. This labour is provisional – for us above all. The theoretical labour process *must be pursued* in a new cycle in which G'2 might be represented by the (+ or – erroneous) relation between Marx and *Reading Capital* etc. Experience has very quickly shown that it is impossible to hold to this *internal circle*: the only way to advance is via the experience of the class struggle.]

Let us return to Figure 1. *Capital* is the product of the work of the Hegelian dialectic on Ricardo etc.

This is a perfectly classical thesis, and one which can, of course, equally well support orthodox-Marxist as anti-Marxist interpretations, since in its schematic formulation, this thesis can give weight to the idea that Marx's relation to Ricardo is reducible to a relation of the *application* of Hegel to Ricardo.

However, this thesis is always stated in the classical tradition along with another equally, if not more, insistent one: the thesis of the *inversion*. It is not Hegel that is applied to Ricardo but Hegel inverted. An enigmatic expression. What does 'inversion' mean? The first index of a problem.

A second index. Very many examples can be found in the classics of Marxism. I shall only take one: Lenin's paradoxical and apparently contradictory declarations on the Marx–Hegel relationship.

In *What the 'Friends of the People' are*, Lenin says that Marx has nothing to do with Hegelian triads and that *Capital* is not their application to Ricardo.

But in his *Reading Notes* (known as the *Philosophical Note-books*), Lenin writes: 'Aphorism: *it is impossible completely to understand Marx's Capital, and especially its first chapter, without having thoroughly studied and understood the whole of Hegel's Logic. Consequently, half a century later none of the Marxists understood Marx!!*'²

However, a page earlier in the same notes, Lenin writes: '*Hegel's analysis of syllogisms . . . recalls Marx's imitation of Hegel in Chapter One.*'³

An expression notably recalling a famous and enigmatic expression of Marx, who, in the Afterword to the second German edition of *Capital*, says:

Just as I was working at the first volume of 'Das Kapital', it was the good pleasure of the peevish, arrogant, mediocre *epigonoï* who now talk large in cultured Germany, to treat Hegel in same way as the brave Moses Mendelssohn in Lessing's time treated *Spinoza*, i.e. as a 'dead dog'. I therefore openly avowed myself the pupil of that mighty thinker, and even *here and there*, in the chapter on the theory of value, *coquetted (kokettieren) with the modes of expression peculiar to him.*

A strange application of Hegel to Ricardo. Let me sum up:

1. Not Hegel: but Hegel *inverted*. Inversion = rational kernel extracted from its mystical shell.

2. Further: 'coquetting' with Hegelian modes of expression (says Marx); an 'imitation' (says Lenin).

3. Leaving aside the imitation and coquetry, there remains the strange inversion. It is the inversion of idealism into materialism: matter in place of the idea. But to say this is to be much too general with respect to what is in question. For Feuerbach had already said and done just this, *in ideology*. Now, our inversion does not only concern the general world outlook but one very precise point: the *dialectic*. Marx 'inverts' it, for his dialectic is the 'direct opposite' of the Hegelian dialectic. What is the opposite of the Hegelian dialectic? A mystery. We must go further: to the *rational kernel*, i.e. to a content with a scientific theoretical value. Then it is no longer a matter of inversion but one of *critical extraction*, of a 'demystification' of the dialectic. What is a demystification? There is no longer any question of an application.

I have brought these indices together and, with considerable difficulty and at the cost of much clumsiness, have advanced the following hypothesis:

1. Marx did not 'apply' Hegel to Ricardo. He made something from Hegel *work* on Ricardo.

2. This something from Hegel is first Hegel *inverted*. The inversion of Hegel only concerns his *world outlook* = the inversion of idealism into materialism. World outlook = *tendency*. Nothing more: the tendency of a world outlook does not *ipso facto* provide any scientific concepts.

3. This something from Hegel is thus something quite different from the *inversion* of the idealist tendency into the materialist tendency. It is something which concerns the *dialectic*. Here the metaphor of the inversion ceases to serve any useful purpose: it is replaced by a different metaphor. To invert the Hegelian dialectic = to demystify it = to *separate* the rational kernel from the irrational shell. This separation is not a mere sorting out (take some and leave some). It can only be a transformation. Marx's dialectic can only be the Hegelian dialectic worked-transformed.

4. Thus Marx makes Hegel work on Ricardo: he makes a transformation of the Hegelian dialectic work on Ricardo.

It is indeed necessary to say that the Hegelian dialectic has been *transformed* in the theoretical work it has carried out on Ricardo. The theoretical instrument of labour which transforms the theoretical raw material is itself transformed by its work of transformation.

The result is the dialectic at work in *Capital*: *it is no longer the Hegelian dialectic, but a quite different dialectic*.

We took this difference for the raw material of our work, as I have suggested in Figure 2.

Hence the results that appear in *For Marx* and *Reading Capital*.
Essentially we found in Marx:

A non-Hegelian conception of *history*.

A non-Hegelian conception of the *social structure* (a structured whole in dominance).

A non-Hegelian conception of the *dialectic*.

Hence, if these theses are well founded, they have crucial consequences for philosophy: above all, the rejection of the basic system of classical philosophical categories.

This system can be written:

(Origin = ((Subject = Object) = Truth) = End = Foundation)

This system is circular, because the Foundation is the fact that the adequation of subject and object is the teleological origin of all truth. I cannot justify this circular sequence here.

There follows from this rejection a new conception of philosophy – not only a new conception – but a new modality of existence, I shall say a new *practice* of philosophy: a philosophical discourse that speaks *from somewhere else* than classical philosophical discourse did. To make this comprehensible, let me invoke the analogy of psychoanalysis.

1. The point is to carry out a *displacement* = to make something *move over* (*bouger*) in the internal disposition of the philosophical categories.

2. Such that philosophical discourse changes its *modality* – speaks *otherwise* (*autrement*), which creates the difference between interpreting the world and changing it.

3. Without philosophy disappearing none the less.

Apparently it is the most conscious discourse there is. *In fact* it is the discourse of an *unconscious*. The point is no more to suppress philosophy than it would be to suppress the unconscious in Freud. What is required is, by working on the phantasms of philosophy (which underlie its categories), to make something move over in the disposition of the instances of the philosophical Unconscious, so that the unconscious discourse of philosophy finds its *site* – and speaks at the top of its voice about the very *site* assigned to it by the instances which produce it.

I shall leave these crucial questions here.

One point remains. Everything we have published on Hegel in fact leaves out the positive heritage Marx, by his own confession, owed to Hegel. Marx transformed the Hegelian dialectic, but he owed Hegel a crucial gift: *the idea of the dialectic*. We have not discussed this. I should like to say a little about it.

In the Afterword to the second German edition of *Capital*, Marx discusses the dialectic in the following terms:

The mystification which the dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands by no

means prevents him from being the first to present (*darstellen*) its general form of motion in a comprehensive and conscious manner. With him it is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell.

In its mystified form, the dialectic became the fashion in Germany, because it seemed to transfigure the existing state of things (*das Bestehende*). In its rational shape (*Gestalt*) it is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire spokesmen, because it includes in the positive comprehension of the existing state of things at the same time also the comprehension of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every developed form as in fluid movement and thus takes into account its transient nature, lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary.⁴

Two notions stand out in this passage:

1. The dialectic is critical and *revolutionary*.

Now, the ambiguity of the dialectic is clear. It can be

- (a) either a *transfiguration* of the existing state of things, the '*fait accompli*' (*das Bestehende*), the existing order. The dialectic: benediction of the existing order (social, scientific)
- (b) or *critical and revolutionary*: it implies the *relativity* of every established order, social and theoretical, of societies and of systems, of institutions and of concepts.

The dialectic: a critique of the absolute by historical relativism.

This theme is very clear in Engels: the dialectic sets concepts in motion. A direct adoption of the Hegelian theme: *Reason* as a critique of the *Intellect*. Reason sets the concepts of the Intellect in motion.

The classical opposition in Marxism between

metaphysical materialism } = metaphysical/dialectical
 dialectical materialism } opposition

is thus no more than the adoption of the Hegelian opposition between *Intellect* and *Reason*.

Stop at this and one has not yet left Hegel. It is still very formal and thus very dangerous. The proof: the spontaneously relativist/historicist interpretation of this conception of the dialectic as a critique of the fixity of the intellect. Counterproof: Lenin's vigorous reaction against relativism and historicism (*Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*), bourgeois ideologies of history and of the dialectic.

2. But there is something else of much greater importance: does the Hegelian *dialectic* contain a *rational kernel* – and if so, what is it?

To see this, a *long detour* is required. It is necessary to go back through Marx's theoretical history. The decisive moment in this history is the

rupture with *Feuerbach*. This rupture is announced in the lightning flash of the Theses on Feuerbach. The Theses on Feuerbach were written in haste after a crucial theoretical event: *the introduction of Hegel into Feuerbach* (it took place in the *1844 Manuscripts*). The *Manuscripts* are an *explosive* text. Hegel, reintroduced by force into Feuerbach, induces a prodigious *acting out* of the young Marx's theoretical contradiction, in which is achieved the rupture with theoretical humanism.

To speak of Marx's rupture with theoretical humanism is a very precise thesis: if Marx broke with this ideology, that means he had espoused it; if he had espoused it (and it was no unconsummated marriage), that means it existed. The theoretical humanism Marx espoused was that of Feuerbach.

Marx 'discovered' Feuerbach, like all the Young Hegelians, in very special conditions, which I have said something about, following Auguste Cornu. For a time Feuerbach 'saved' the young Hegelian radicals theoretically from the insoluble contradictions induced in their liberal-rationalist 'philosophical conscience' by the obstinacy of the damned Prussian state, which, being 'in itself' Reason and Freedom, persisted in misrecognizing its own 'essence', persevering beyond all propriety in the Unreason of Despotism. Feuerbach 'saved' them theoretically by providing them with the reason for the Reason-Unreason contradiction: by a theory of the *alienation of man*.

Obviously it would be impossible, on whatever basis, even a Marxist one, to think that the matter of Feuerbach can be settled by a confessional note of the kind: a few quotations from him, or from Marx and Engels, who *had* read him. Nor is it settled by that adjective of convenience and ignorance which none the less resounds in so many disputes: a *speculative* anthropology. As though it were enough to remove the speculation from the anthropology for the anthropology (assuming one knows what that word designates) to stand up: cut the head off a duck, and it won't go far. As though it were also enough to pronounce these magic words to call Feuerbach by his name (philosophers, even if they are not watchdogs, are like you and me: for them to come, they must at least be called *by their names*.) Let me therefore try to call Feuerbach by his name, even if need be by an abbreviation of his name.

Of course, I shall only discuss the Feuerbach of the years 1839–45, i.e. the author of *The Essence of Christianity* and the *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* – and not the post-1848 Feuerbach, who, against, his own earlier precepts, put a lot of 'water in his wine' for fear of the (1848) Revolution.

The Feuerbach of *The Essence of Christianity* occupies a quite extraordinary position in the history of philosophy. Indeed, he brings off the *tour de force* of putting an 'end to classical German philosophy', of overthrowing (to be quite precise: of 'inverting') Hegel, the Last of the

Philosophers, in whom all its history is summed up, by a philosophy that was *theoretically retrogressive* with respect to the great German idealist philosophy.

Retrogressive must be understood in a precise sense. If Feuerbach's philosophy carried in it traces of German idealism, its theoretical foundations date from *before* German idealism. With Feuerbach we return from 1810 to 1750, from the nineteenth to the eighteenth century. Paradoxically, for reasons that should make a good 'dialectic' derived from Hegel giddy, it was by its *retrogressive* character in theory that Feuerbach's philosophy had fortunate progressive effects in the ideology, and even in the political history, of its partisans. But enough on this.

A philosophy which carries *traces* of German idealism but which settles accounts with German idealism, and its supreme representative, Hegel, by a *theoretically retrogressive* system, what are we to make of that?

The *traces* of German idealism: Feuerbach takes up the philosophical problems posed by German idealism. Above all the problems of pure reason and practical reason, the problems of nature and freedom, the problems of knowledge (what can I know?), of morality (what ought I to do?) and of religion (what can I hope for?). Hence Kant's fundamental problems, but 'returned to' via Hegel's critique and solutions (broadly the critique of Kantian distinctions as abstractions, which for Hegel derive from a misrecognition of Reason reduced to the role of the Intellect). Feuerbach poses the problems of German idealism with the intention of giving them a Hegelian type of solution: indeed, he tries to pose the *unity* of the Kantian *distinctions* or *abstractions* in something resembling the Hegelian Idea. This 'something' resembling the Hegelian Idea, while being its radical *inversion* is *man*, or *nature*, or *Sinnlichkeit* (simultaneously sensuous materiality, receptivity and sensuous intersubjectivity).

To hold all this together, I mean to think as a *single* unit these three notions: man, nature and *Sinnlichkeit*, is a dumbfounding theoretical gamble, which makes Feuerbach's 'philosophy' a philosophical velleity, i.e. an actual theoretical inconsistency invested in a 'wish' for an impossible philosophical consistency. A moving 'wish,' certainly, even a pathetic one, since it expresses and proclaims in great solemn cries the desperate will to escape from a philosophical ideology against which it remains definitively a rebel, i.e. its prisoner. The fact is that this impossible unity gave rise to a work which has played a part in history and produced disconcerting effects, some immediate (on Marx and his friends), others postponed (on Nietzsche, on Phenomenology, on a certain modern theology, and even on the recent 'hermeneutic' philosophy which derives from it).

It was an impossible unity (man–nature–*Sinnlichkeit*) which enabled Feuerbach to 'resolve' the great philosophical problems of German ideal-

ism, 'transcending' Kant and 'inverting' Hegel. For example, the Kantian problems of the distinction between pure reason and practical reason, between nature and freedom etc. find a solution with Feuerbach in a *unique* principle: man and his attributes. For example, the Kantian problem of scientific objectivity and the Hegelian problem of religion find a solution with Feuerbach in an extraordinary theory of *mirror* objectivity ('the object of a being is the objectification of its Essence': the object – the objects – of man are the objectification of the Human Essence). For example, the Kantian problem of the Idea and history, transcended by Hegel in the theory of the Spirit as the ultimate moment of the Idea, finds a solution with Feuerbach in an extraordinary theory of the intersubjectivity constitutive of the human species. As the principal term in all these solutions, we always find man, his attributes and his 'essential' objects (mirror 'reflections' of his Essence).

Thus, with Feuerbach, man is the unique, primordial and fundamental concept, the *factotum*, which stands in for Kant's Transcendental Subject, Noumenal Subject, Empirical Subject and Idea, which also stands in for Hegel's Idea. The 'end of classical German philosophy' is then quite simply a verbal suppression of its solutions which respects its problems. It is a replacement of its solutions by heteroclitc philosophical notions gathered from here and there in the philosophy of the eighteenth century (sensualism, empiricism, the materialism of *Sinnlichkeit*, borrowed from the tradition of Condillac; a pseudo-biologism vaguely inspired by Diderot; an idealism of man and the 'heart' drawn from Rousseau), and unified by a *play on theoretical words* within the concept of man.

Hence the extraordinary position and the effects Feuerbach could draw from his inconsistency: declaring himself in turn and all at once (and he saw no malice or inconsistency in it himself) a materialist, an idealist, a rationalist, a sensualist, an empiricist, a realist, an atheist and a humanist. Hence his declamations against Hegel's speculation, reduced to *abstraction*. Hence his appeals to the concrete, to the 'thing itself', to the real, to the sensuous, to matter, against all the forms of alienation, whose ultimate essence is for him constituted by *abstraction*. Hence the sense of his 'inversion' of Hegel, which Marx long espoused as the real critique of Hegel, whereas it is still entirely trapped in the empiricism of which Hegel is no more than the sublimated theory: to invert the attribute into the subject, to invert the Idea into the sensuous real, into matter, to invert the Abstract into the Concrete etc. All that within the category of *man*, who is the Real, the Sensuous and the Concrete. An old tune whose worn-out variations are still served up for us today.

There you have the *Theoretical Humanism* which Marx had to deal with. I say *theoretical*, for man is not just for Feuerbach an Idea in the Kantian sense, but the theoretical foundation for *all* his 'philosophy', as the *cogito* was for Descartes, the Transcendental Subject for Kant and

the Idea for Hegel. It is this theoretical humanism that we find in so many words in the *1844 Manuscripts*.

But before turning to Marx, one more word on the consequences of this paradoxical philosophical position which claims radically to abolish German idealism but which respects its problems and hopes to resolve them by the intervention of a heap of eighteenth-century concepts, gathered together within the theoretical injunction of man, which stands in for their 'philosophical' unity and consistency.

For it is not possible to 'return' with impunity to a position *behind* a philosophy while retaining the problems it has brought to light.

The fundamental consequence of this theoretical retrogression accompanied by a retention of current problems is to induce an enormous *contraction* of the existing philosophical problematic, behind the appearances of its 'inversion', which is no more than the impossible 'wish' to invert it.

Engels and Lenin were perfectly well aware of this 'contraction' with respect to Hegel. 'Feuerbach is small in comparison with Hegel.' Let us go straight to the essential: what Feuerbach unforgivably sacrificed of Hegel is history and the dialectic, or rather, since it is one and the same thing for Hegel, history *or* the dialectic. Here too, Marx, Engels and Lenin made no mistake: Feuerbach is a materialist in the sciences, but . . . he is an idealist in history. Feuerbach speaks of nature, but . . . he does not speak of history – nature standing in for it. Feuerbach is not dialectical. Etc.

Having obtained this perspective, let us specify these established judgments.

Of course, history certainly is discussed by Feuerbach, who hopes to distinguish between the 'Hindu', the 'Judaic', the 'Roman' etc. 'human natures'. But there is no *theory* of history in his work. And above all there is no trace of the theory of history we owe to Hegel as a *dialectical process of production of forms (figures)*.

Of course, as we can now begin to say, what irremediably disfigures the Hegelian conception of history as a dialectical process is its *teleological* conception of the dialectic, inscribed in the very *structures* of the Hegelian dialectic at an extremely precise point; the *Aufhebung* (transcendence-preserving-the-transcended-as-the-internalized-transcended), directly expressed in the Hegelian category of the *negation of the negation* (or negativity).

To criticize the Hegelian philosophy of history because it is *teleological*, because from its origins it is in pursuit of a goal (the realization of Absolute Knowledge), hence to reject the teleology in the philosophy of history, but to return to the Hegelian dialectic as such at the same time, is to fall into a strange contradiction: for the Hegelian dialectic, too, is teleological in its *structures*, since the key structure of the Hegelian

dialectic is the *negation of the negation, which is the teleology itself*, within the dialectic.

That is why the question of the structures of the dialectic is the key question dominating the whole problem of a materialist dialectic. That is why Stalin can be taken for a perceptive Marxist philosopher, at least on this point, since he struck the negation of the negation from the 'laws' of the dialectic. But to the extent, I say to the extent, that it is possible to abstract from the teleology in the Hegelian conception of history and the dialectic, it is still true that we owe Hegel something which Feuerbach, blinded by his obsession with man and the Concrete, was absolutely incapable of understanding: the conception of history as a *process*. Indisputably, for it passed into his works, and *Capital* is the evidence, Marx owes Hegel this decisive philosophical category, *process*.

He owes him even more, which Feuerbach was again unable even to suspect. He owes him the concept of a process *without a subject*. It is fashionable in philosophical conversations, which are sometimes turned into books, to say that in Hegel, history is the 'history of the alienation of man'. Whatever the intention behind the pronunciation of such a formulation, it *states* a philosophical proposition which has an implacable meaning, one which is locatable in its offspring, if not discernible in their mother. It is to state: history is *a process of alienation which has a subject*, and that subject is man.

Now, as M. Hyppolite has very well noted, nothing is more foreign to Hegel's thought than this *anthropological* conception of history. For Hegel, history is certainly a process of alienation, but this process does not have man as its subject. First, in the Hegelian history it is not a matter of man, but of the Spirit, and if one must *at all costs* (which in respect of a 'subject' is false anyway) have a 'subject' in history, it is the 'nations' that should be discussed, or more accurately (and we are approaching the truth) it is the *moments* of the development of the Idea become Spirit. What does this mean? Something very simple, but if it must be 'interpreted', something important from the theoretical point of view: history is not the alienation of man, but the alienation of the Spirit, i.e. the ultimate moment of the alienation of the Idea. For Hegel, the process of alienation does not 'begin' with (human) *history*, since history is itself no more than the alienation of nature, itself the alienation of Logic. Alienation, which is the dialectic (in its final principle the negation of the negation or *Aufhebung*), or to speak more precisely, the *process of alienation*, is not, as a whole current of modern philosophy which 'corrects' and 'contracts', Hegel would have it, peculiar to human history.

From the point of view of human history the process of alienation has *always already begun*. That means, if these terms are taken seriously, that, in Hegel, history is thought as a *process of alienation without a subject*, or a dialectical process *without a subject*. Once one is prepared

to consider just for a moment that the whole Hegelian teleology is contained in the expressions I have just stated, in the categories of alienation, or in what constitutes the master structure of the category of the dialectic (the negation of the negation), and once one accepts, if that is possible, to *abstract* from what represents the teleology in these expressions, then there remains the formulation: history is *a process without a subject*. I think I can affirm: this category of *a process without a subject*, which must, of course, be torn from the grip of the Hegelian teleology, undoubtedly represents the greatest theoretical debt linking Marx to Hegel.

I well know that, finally, there is in Hegel a *subject* for this process of alienation without a subject. But it is a very strange subject, one on which many important comments would have to be made: this subject is the very *teleology* of the *process*, it is the *Idea*, in the process of self-alienation which constitutes it as the *Idea*.

This is not an esoteric thesis on Hegel: it can be verified at each instant, i.e. at each 'moment' of the Hegelian process. To say that there is no *subject* to the process of alienation whether in history, in nature or in Logic, is quite simply to say that one cannot at any 'moment' assign as a subject to the process of alienation any 'subject' whatsoever: neither some being (not even man) nor some nation, nor some 'moment' of the process, neither history, nor nature, nor Logic.

The only *subject* of the process of alienation is *the process itself in its teleology*. The subject of the process is not even the end of the process itself (a mistake is possible here: does not Hegel say that the Spirit is 'Substance becoming Subject?'); it is the process of alienation as in pursuit of its end, and hence the process of alienation itself as teleological.

Nor is teleological a determination which is added to the process of alienation without a subject *from the outside*. The teleology of the process of alienation is inscribed in black and white in its definition: in the concept of *alienation*, which is the teleology itself *in the process*.

Now perhaps it is here that the strange status of *Logic* in Hegel begins to be clearer. For what is Logic? The science of the *Idea*, i.e. the exposition of its concept, the *concept of the process of alienation without a subject*, in other words, the concept of the process of self-alienation which, considered in its totality, is nothing but the *Idea*. Thus conceived, Logic, or the concept of the *Idea*, is the dialectic, the 'path' of the process as a process, the 'absolute method'. If Logic is nothing but the concept of the *Idea* (of the process of alienation without a subject), it is then the concept of this strange subject we are looking for. But the fact that this subject is only the concept of the *process of alienation itself*, in other words, this subject is the dialectic, i.e. the very movement of the negation of the negation, reveals the extraordinary paradox of Hegel. The process of alienation without a subject (or the dialectic) is the only subject recog-

nized by Hegel. There is no subject to the process: *it is the process itself which is a subject in so far as it does not have a subject.*

If we want to find what, finally, stands in for 'subject' in Hegel, it is in the teleological nature of this process, in the *teleological* nature of the dialectic, that it must be sought: the end is already there in the origin. That is also why there is in Hegel no *origin*, or (which is never anything but its phenomenon) any beginning. The origin, indispensable to the teleological nature of the process (since it is only the reflection of its end), has to be *denied* from the moment it is *affirmed* for the process of alienation to be a process without a subject. It would take too long to justify this proposition, which I propose simply in order to anticipate later developments: this implacable exigency (to affirm and in the same moment to *deny* the origin) was consciously assumed by Hegel in his theory of the *beginning* of Logic: Being is immediately non-Being. The beginning of the Logic is the theory of the non-primordial nature of the origin. Hegel's Logic is the origin affirmed-denied: the first form of a concept that Derrida has introduced into philosophical reflection, *erasure* (*rature*).

But the Hegelian 'erasure' constituted by the Logic from its first words is the negation of the negation, dialectical and hence teleological. It is in teleology that there lies the true Hegelian subject. Take away the teleology, and there remains the philosophical category that Marx inherited: the category of a *process without a subject*.

That is Marx's principal *positive* debt to Hegel: the concept of a *process without a subject*.

It underpins *Capital* from beginning to end. Marx was perfectly aware of it. Witness this note added by Marx to the French edition of *Capital*.

Marx: *Le Capital*, tome I (a note found only in the French edition!):

The word 'procès' (process), which expresses *a development considered in the totality of its real conditions*, has long been a part of scientific language throughout Europe. In France it was first introduced slightly shamefacedly in its Latin form – *processus*. Then, stripped of this pedantic disguise, it slipped into books on chemistry, physics, physiology etc., and into a few works of metaphysics. In the end it will obtain a certificate of complete naturalization. Let us note in passing that in ordinary speech the Germans, like the French, use the word *Prozess* (*procès*, process) in the legal sense [i.e. trial].⁵

In passing, let me draw attention to the fact that the concept of a process without a subject also underpins the whole of Freud's work.

But to speak of a process without a subject implies that the notion of a subject is an *ideological notion*.

If the following double thesis is taken seriously:

1. the concept process is scientific,
2. the notion subject is ideological, then two consequences follow:
 1. a revolution in the sciences: the science of history becomes formally possible,
 2. a revolution in philosophy: for all classical philosophy depends on the categories of subject and object (object = a mirror reflection of subject).

But this positive heritage is still *formal*. The question posed then is as follows: what are *the conditions of the process* of history?

Here Marx no longer owes anything to Hegel: on the decisive point he contributes something without any precedent, i.e.:

There is no such thing as a process except in relations (sous des rapports): the relations of production (to which Capital is restricted) and other (political, ideological) relations.

Our mediations on this scientific discovery and its philosophical consequences are not yet over: we are only beginning to suspect them and assess their extent. It hardly need be said that it is not by dabbling in structuralist ideology that we can obtain the means to explore the immense space of the continent that Marx has opened for us (Marx's *Verbindungen* do not amount to a 'combinatory'!).

The continent was opened up a hundred years ago. The only people who have ventured into it are militants of the revolutionary class struggle. To our shame, intellectuals do not even suspect the existence of this continent, except to annex and exploit it as a common colony.

We must recognize and explore this continent, to liberate it of its occupiers. To reach it it is enough to follow those who went before us a hundred years ago: the revolutionary militants of the class struggle. We must learn with them what they already know. On this condition we too shall be able to make discoveries in it, of the kind announced by Marx in 1845: discoveries which help not to 'interpret' the world, but to change it. To change the world is not to explore the moon. It is to make the revolution and build socialism without regressing back to capitalism.

The rest, including the moon, will be given to us in addition.

Notes

1 'Le (Re)-commencement du matérialisme dialectique', *Critique*, no. 240, May 1967.

2 Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 38 (London and Moscow, 1961), p. 180.

3 *ibid.*, p. 178.

4 *Capital*, vol. I (Moscow, 1961), p. 20.

5 Karl Marx, *Le Capital*, t. I (Editions Sociales, Paris, 1948), p. 181n.

Extract from *Negative Dialectics* (1966)

Theodor W. Adorno

The supramundane character of the Hegelian world spirit

By Hegel, however, notably by the Hegel of *Philosophy of History* and *Philosophy of Law*, the historical objectivity that happened to come about is exalted into transcendence: 'This universal substance is not the mundane; the mundane impotently strives against it. No individual can get beyond this substance; he can differ from other individuals, but not from the popular spirit.'¹

The opposite of the 'mundane', the identity to which the particular entity is unidentically doomed, would thus be 'supramundane'. There is a grain of truth even to such ideology: the critic of his own popular spirit is also chained to what is commensurable to him, as long as mankind is splintered into nations. In the recent past the greatest, though mostly disparagingly garbed model of this has been the constellation between Karl Kraus and Vienna. But to Hegel, as always when he meets with something contrary, things are not that dialectical. The individual, he goes on, 'may have more *esprit* than many others, but he cannot surpass the popular spirit. *Les esprits* are merely those who know about their people's spirit and know how to go by it.'² With a malice that one cannot fail to hear in the use of the word *esprit*, the relationship is described far beneath the level of the Hegelian conception. 'To go by it' would be literally nothing but to adjust. Like one confessing compulsively, Hegel deciphers his previously taught affirmative identity as a continuing break and postulates the submission of the weak to the more powerful. Euphemisms such as that in *Philosophy of History*, that in the course of world history 'some individuals have been hurt',³ are involuntary approaches to a sense of non-reconciliation, and the trumpet call 'Duty is the individual's liberation to substantial freedom'⁴ – a common property of

German thought, by the way – already defies distinction from its parody in the doctor scene from Büchner's *Woyzeck*.

What Hegel puts into philosophy's mouth is 'that no power surpasses that of the good, of God, and keeps him from prevailing; that God is borne out; that world history represents nothing but the plan of Providence. God rules the world; the content of his rule, the execution of his plan, is world history; to comprehend this plan is the philosophy of world history; and its premise is that the ideal is accomplished, that only that which is in line with the idea has reality.'⁵ The world spirit seems to have worked in pretty cunning fashion when Hegel, as if to crown his edifying homily – to use Arnold Schönberg's phrase – apes Heidegger in advance: 'For reason is the perceiving of the divine work.'⁶ The omnipotent thought has to abdicate and to make itself complaisant as mere perceiving.

To gild the heteronomy of the substantially universal, Hegel mobilizes Greek conceptions this side of experienced individuality. In such passages he vaults all historic dialects and unhesitatingly proclaims that morality's form in Antiquity, the form which was first that of official Greek philosophy and then the one of German *Gymnasien*, is its true form: 'For the morality of the state is not the moralistic, reflected one in which one's own convictions hold sway; this is more accessible to the modern world, while the true morality of Antiquity has its roots in every man's stand by his duty.'⁷

The objective spirit takes revenge on Hegel. As memorial orator of Spartanism he anticipates the jargon of intrinsicality by a hundred years, with the term 'stand by his duty'. He stoops to offering victims decorative comfort without touching on the substantiality of the condition whose victims they are. What spooks there, behind his superior declarations, had previously been petty cash in the bourgeois till of Schiller, in whose 'Song of the Bell' the *pater familias* burned out of house and home is not only sent wandering, i.e. begging, but told to do it merrily, to boot; for a nation – said to be worthless otherwise – Schiller prescribes joy in committing its all to its honour. The terror of good cheer internalizes the *contrainte sociale*.

Such exaggeration is not a poetic luxury. The idealistic social pedagogue must do something extra, since without the performance of additional and irrational identification it would be all too flagrant that the universal robs the particular of what is being promised. Hegel associates the power of the universal with the aesthetically formal concept of greatness: 'These are a people's great men; they guide the people in accordance with the universal spirit. For us, the individualities disappear and are noteworthy only as those who realize the will of the popular spirit.'⁸ The blithely decreed disappearance of individualities – a negative which philosophy presumes to know as positive without any real change having occurred in it – is the equivalent of the continuing break. The power of the

world spirit sabotages what a subsequent Hegelian passage extols in the individual: 'That he is in line with his substance is due to himself.'⁹

And yet the phrasing of the dismissal touches on serious matters. The world spirit is said to be 'the spirit of the world as it explicates itself in human consciousness: men relate to it as individuals to the whole, which is their substance'.¹⁰ There Hegel is telling off the bourgeois conception of the individual, its vulgar nominalism. The very grimness with which a man clings to himself, as to the immediately sure and substantial, makes him an agent of the universal, and individuality a deceptive notion. On this, Hegel agreed with Schopenhauer; what he had over Schopenhauer was the insight that the abstract negation of individuality is not all there is to the dialectics of individuation and universality. The remaining objection, however – not just against Schopenhauer but against Hegel himself – is that the individual, the necessary phenomenon of the essence, the objective tendency, is right to turn against that tendency, since he confronts it with its externality and fallibility. This is implicit in Hegel's doctrine of the individual's substantiality 'by way of himself'. Yet instead of developing the doctrine, Hegel sticks to an abstract antithesis of universal and particular, an antithesis that ought to be unbearable to his own method.¹¹

Hegel siding with the universal

Opposed to such a separation of substantiality and individuality, as much as to a narrowly immediate consciousness, is the insight of Hegelian logic into the unity of the particular and the universal, a unity which sometimes strikes him as identity.

Particularity, however, as universality, is such an immanent relation in and for itself, not by way of transition; it is totality in itself and simple definition, essentially a principle. It has no other definition than the one posited by the universal itself and resulting from the universal, as follows. The particular is the universal itself, but it is the universal's difference from or relation to something else, what it seems to be on the outside; but there exists nothing else from which the particular might differ, nothing but the universal itself. When the universal is defined, it is the particular; definition makes the difference; it differs only from itself.¹²

Immediately, then, the particular would be the universal, because it can find no definition of its particularity except by way of the universal only; without the universal, Hegel concludes in an ever-recurring mode, the particular is nothing. The modern history of the human spirit – and not

that alone – has been an apologetic labour of Sisyphus: thinking away the negative side of the universal. The Kantian spirit still remembers it, as against necessity: Kant tried to confine necessity to nature. The Hegelian critique of necessity is removed by legerdemain.

The consciousness of the spirit must form in the world; the material, the soil, of this realization is nothing but the universal consciousness, the consciousness of a people. The consciousness contains and directs all of the people's purposes and interests; it makes up the people's rights, customs, religions. It is the substantial part of a people's spirit even if the individuals do not know it, even if it stands as a settled premise. It is like a necessity; the individual is raised in this atmosphere and knows of nothing else. Yet it is not merely education and a consequence of education; rather, this consciousness is developed by the individual himself, not taught to him: the individual has his being in that substance.¹³

The Hegelian phrasing 'It is like a necessity' is very adequate to the preponderance of the universal; the 'like' – suggesting the merely metaphorical character of such a necessity – fleetingly touches on the semblance character of that which is the most real of things. Doubts whether necessity is good are promptly knocked down with the avowal that, rain or shine, necessity is freedom. The individual, Hegel tells us, 'has his being in that substance', in the universality which to him was still coinciding with the popular spirit. But its positivity itself is negative, and the more negative its bearing, the more positive it will be; unity gets worse as its seizure of plurality becomes more thorough. It has its praise bestowed on it by the victor, and even a spiritual victor will not do without his triumphal parade, without the ostentatious pretence that what is incessantly inflicted upon the many is the meaning of the world.

'It is the particular which fights each other to exhaustion, and a part of which is ruined. But it is precisely from struggle, from the fall of the particular, that the universal results. The universal is not disturbed.'¹⁴ It has not been disturbed to this day. And yet, according to Hegel, without the particular that defines it, as a thing detached from itself, there would be no universal either. There is only one way for Hegelian logic succinctly to identify a universal and an undefined particular, to equate cognition with the fact that the two poles are mediated; and that is for logic – which Hegel also views as an *a priori* doctrine of general structures – not to deal with the particular as a particular at all. His logic deals only with particularity, which is already conceptual.¹⁵ Thus established, the logical primacy of the universal provides a fundament for the social and political primacy that Hegel is opting for.

This much should be granted to Hegel: not only particularity but the

particular itself is unthinkable without the moment of the universal which differentiates the particular, puts its imprint on it, and in a sense is needed to make a particular of it. But the fact that dialectically one moment needs the other, the moment contradictorily opposed to it – this fact, as Hegel knew well but liked to forget on occasion, reduces neither moment to a $\mu\eta\delta\nu$. Stipulated otherwise would be the absolute, ontological validity of the logic of pure non-contradictoriness, which the dialectical demonstration of ‘moments’ had broken through; ultimately stipulated would be the position of an absolute First – the concept – with the fact said to be secondary because according to idealistic tradition it ‘follows’ from the concept. Of a particular, nothing can be predicated without definition and thus without universality, and yet this does not submerge the moment of something particular, something opaque, which that prediction refers to and is based upon. It is maintained within the constellation, else dialectics would end up hypostatizing mediation without preserving the moments of immediacy, as Hegel prudently wished to do everywhere else.

Relapse into Platonism

The immanent critique of dialectics explodes Hegelian idealism. Cognition aims at the particular, not at the universal. It seeks its true object in the possible determination of the difference of that particular – even from the universal, which it criticizes as none the less inalienable. But if the mediation of the universal by the particular and of the particular by the universal is reduced to the abstract normal form of mediation as such, the particular has to pay the price, down to its authoritarian dismissal in the material parts of the Hegelian system.

What man must do, what are the duties he has to fulfil to be virtuous, is easily told in a moral community – he has to do nothing other than is prescribed, expressed, and known to him in his circumstances. Probability is the universal that can be demanded of him, partly legally, partly morally. From the moral standpoint, however, it tends to appear as something subordinate, beyond which one ought to ask more of himself and of others; for the urge to be something particular is not contented by that which is in and for itself and universal. It is only in an exception that this urge will find the sense of intrinsicality.¹⁶

If Hegel had carried the doctrine of the identity of universal and particular further, to a dialectic in the particular itself, the particular – which according to him is simply the mediated universal – would have been granted the same right as the universal. That he depreciates this right

into a mere urge and psychologically blackens the right of man as narcissism – like a father chiding his son, ‘Maybe you think you’re something special’ – this is not an individual lapse on the philosopher’s part. Idealistically, there is no carrying out the dialectic of the particular which he envisions. Contrary to the Kantian *chorismos*, philosophy is not supposed to make itself at home in the universal as a doctrine of forms; it is to penetrate the content itself, rather, and this is why, in a grandiosely fatal *petitio principii*, reality is so arranged by philosophy that it will yield to the repressive identification with philosophy.

What is most true in Hegelian thinking, the sense of the particular without whose weight the concept of reality decays into a farce, leads to that which is most false. It removes the particular for which Hegel’s philosophy is groping. The more insistently his concept strives for reality, the more benightedly is reality – the *hic et nunc* that should be cracked open as gilded nuts are cracked by children on a holiday – contaminated by him with the concept that covers it.

It is this very attitude of philosophy towards reality which the misconceptions affect, and so I come back to what I said before: that philosophy, because it means to fathom what is rational, means precisely therefore to grasp what is present and real, not to erect a Beyond said to be God knows where – or of which one can in fact say very well where it is, namely, in the error of empty, one-sided rationalizing. . . . When reflection, feeling, or whatever form the subjective consciousness may take, regards the present as vain, when it goes beyond the present and knows better, it is likewise vain, and being real only in the present, it is nothing but vanity. Conversely, if the idea is taken to be no more than just an idea, a conception held as an opinion, philosophy affords the insight that nothing but the idea is a reality. What matters, then, is that in the semblance of the temporal and transitory we may know the substance which is immanent, and the eternal which is present.¹⁷

So Platonic, of necessity, is the dialectician’s language. He will not admit that, from the viewpoint of logic as well as of the philosophy of history, the universal contracts into the particular until the latter breaks loose from the abstract universality that has grown extraneous to it – while the universal he vindicates, as a higher objectivity, correlatively declines to a bad subjectivity, to the mean value of particularities. He who was set upon a transition of logic to time is now resigned to timeless logic.

Detemporalization of time

The simple dichotomy of temporality and eternal amidst and despite the Hegelian conception of dialectics conforms to the primacy of the universal in *Philosophy of History*. Just as the general concept, the fruit of abstraction, is deemed above time – and just as the loss which the subsumed suffers by the process of abstraction is entered in the profit column, as a draft on eternity – so are history's allegedly supratemporal moments turned into *positiva*. Hidden in them is the old evil, however. To agree to the perpetuation of the *status quo* is to discredit the protesting thought as ephemeral. Such an about-face into timelessness is not extraneous to Hegel's dialectics and philosophy of history. As his version of dialectics extends to time itself, time is ontologized, turned from a subjective form into a structure of being as such, itself eternal.

Based on this are Hegel's speculations which equate the absolute idea of totality with the passing of everything finite. His attempt to deduce time, as it were, and to eternalize it as permitting nothing outside it is as much in line with this conception as with absolute idealism, which can no more resign itself to the separation of time and logic than Kant could to the separation of visuality and intellect. There again, by the way, Hegel, Kant's critic, was Kant's executor. When Kant turns time, as the pure visual form and premise of everything temporal, into an *a priori*, time on its part is exempted from time.¹⁸ Subjective and objective idealism concur in this, for the basic stratum of both is the subject as a concept, devoid of its temporal content. Once again, as to Aristotle, the *actus purus* becomes that which does not move. The social partisanship of the idealists goes all the way down to the constituents of their systems. They glorify time as timeless, history as eternal – all for fear that history might begin.

For Hegel, the dialectic of time and temporality logically turns into a dialectic of time in itself.¹⁹ It offers the positivists their favoured point of attack. In fact, it would be bad scholasticism if dialectics were attributed to the formal concept of time, with every temporal content expurgated. In critical reflection, however, time is dialecticized as the internally mediated unity of form and content. Kant's transcendental aesthetics would have no answer to the objection that the purely formal character of time as a 'form of visuality', its 'emptiness', has itself no corresponding visuality whatever. Kantian time defies every possible conception and imagination: to conceive it, we always have to conceive something temporal along with it, something to read it off on, something that permits its passage or its so-called flow to be experienced. The fact is that the conception of pure time does require that very conceptual mediation – the abstraction from all conceptions of time that can be carried out –

from which Kant, for the sake of systematics, the disjunction of sensibility and intellect, wished and needed to relieve the forms of visibility.

Absolute time as such, bereft of the last factual substrate that is and passes in it, would no longer be what time, according to Kant, must inalienably be: it would no longer be dynamic. There is no dynamics without that in which it occurs. Conversely, however, a factuality without its place in the time continuum is not conceivable either. Dialectics carries this reciprocity into the most formal realm: of the moments essential to that realm, and opposed to each other, not one is without the other. Yet the reciprocity is not motivated by the pure form in itself that served to reveal it. A relationship of form and content has become the form itself. It is inalienably the form of a content – an extreme sublimation of the form-content dualism in detached and absolutized subjectivity.

An element of truth might even be squeezed out of Hegel's theory of time, provided one will not let logic produce time by itself, as he does; to be perceived in logic, instead, are coagulated time relations, as indicated variously, if cryptically, in *Critique of Pure Reason*, in the chapter on schematism in particular. Preserved likewise in the discursive *Logic* – unmistakably in its conclusions – are time elements that were detemporalized as subjective thinking objectified them into pure legality; without such detemporalization, on the other hand, time would not have been objectified at all. As cognition of an element, it would be compatible with Hegel to interpret the link between logic and time by going back to something which current positivistic science considers pre-logical in logic. For what Hegel calls synthesis is not simply the downright new quality leaping forth from definite negation; it is the return of what has been negated. Dialectical progress is always a recourse as well, to that which fell victim to the progressing concept; the concept's progressive concretion is its self-correction. The transition of logic to time would like, as far as consciousness is able, to make up to time for the wrongs done to it by logic – by the logic without which, on the other hand, time would not be.

Under this aspect, the Bergsonian duplication of the concept of time is a bit of dialectics unaware of itself. In the concept of *le temps durée*, of lived duration, Bergson tried theoretically to reconstruct the living experience of time, and thus its substantial element that had been sacrificed to the abstractions of philosophy and of causal-mechanical natural science. Even so, he did not convert to the dialectical concept any more than science did. More positivistically than he knew in his polemicizing, he absolutized the dynamic element out of disgust with the rising reification of consciousness; he on his part made of it a form of consciousness, so to speak, a particular and privileged mode of cognition. He reified it, if you will, into a line of business. In isolation, the time of subjective experience along with its content comes to be as accidental

and mediated as its subject, and therefore, compared with chronometric time, is always 'false' also. Sufficient to elucidate this is the triviality that, measured by clock time, subjective time experiences invite delusion, although there would be no clock time without the subjective time experience which the clock time objectifies.

But the crass dichotomy of Bergson's two times does register the historic dichotomy between living experience and the objectified and repetitive labour process; his brittle doctrine of time is an early precipitation of the objective social crisis in the sense of time. The irreconcilability of *temps durée* and *temps espace* is the wound of that split consciousness whose only unity lies in being split. The naturalistic interpretation of *temps espace* can no more master this than the hypostasis of *temps durée*, in which the subject, flinching from reification, hopes in vain to preserve itself simply by being alive. The fact is that laughter – according to Bergson, the restoration of life from its conventional hardening – has long become the conventions' weapon against uncomprehended life, against the traces of something natural that has not been quite domesticated.

Dialectics cut short by Hegel

Hegel's transposition of the particular into particularity follows the practice of a society that tolerates the particular only as a category, a form of the supremacy of the universal. Marx designated this state of facts in a manner which Hegel could not foresee:

The dissolution of all products and activities into exchange values presupposes the dissolution of all fixed personal (historical) dependencies in production as well as the producers' universal dependence on each other. Every individual's production depends as much on the production of all others as the transformation of his product into food for himself has come to depend on the consumption of all others. . . . This mutual interdependence is expressed in the constant necessity of exchange, and in the exchange value as universal mediator. The economists put it this way: everyone pursues his private interest and thus unwillingly and unwittingly serves the private interests of all, the general interests. The joke is not that everyone's pursuit of his private interest will in effect serve the entirety of private interests, that is the general interest; from this abstract phrase it might as well be inferred that everyone mutually inhibits the pursuit of the others' interest, and that, instead of general affirmation, the result of this *bellum omnium contra omnes* will be general negation. The point is, rather, that the private interest itself is already a socially determined interest, one that

can be pursued only on the terms laid down by society and by the means provided by society – hence an interest tied to the reproduction of those terms and means. It is the interest of private persons; but its content as well as the form and means of realization are given by social conditions independent of them all.²⁰

Such negative supremacy of the concept makes clear why Hegel, its apologist, and Marx, its critic, concur in the notion that what Hegel calls the world spirit has a preponderance of being-in-itself – that it does not (as would be solely fitting for Hegel) have merely its objective substance in the individuals: ‘The individuals are subsumed under social production, which exists as a doom outside them; but social production is not subsumed under the individuals who exercise it as their common capacity.’²¹ The real *chorismos* obliges Hegel, much against his will, to remodel his thesis of the reality of the idea. The theory does not admit this, but there are unmistakable lines about it in *Philosophy of Law*:

For the idea of the state one must not look to particular states or particular institutions; rather, the idea, this real God, must be contemplated by itself. Every state, although a man may call it bad according to the principles he holds, although he may find one or the other flaw in it, always contains the essential moments of its existence, especially if it is one of the developed states of our time. But because finding faults is easier than grasping the affirmative, one will easily fall into the error of letting specific sides make one forget the inner organism of the state itself.²²

The tenor of the whole work is to dispute away the contradiction between idea and reality; but if the idea ‘must be contemplated by itself’, not in ‘particular states’, and that in principle, with an encompassing structure in mind, this resurrects the contradiction. In keeping with it is the ominous line that finding faults is easier than grasping the affirmative; today this has become the clamour for ‘constructive criticism’, in other words, grovelling criticism. Because the identity of idea and reality is denied by reality, ascertaining that identity none the less calls, so to speak, for an obsequious special effort on the part of reason; the ‘affirmative’, the proof of positively accomplished reconciliation, is postulated, praised as a superior achievement of consciousness, because Hegel’s pure eye witness does not suffice for such affirmation. The pressure which affirmation exerts on a balky reality acts tirelessly to strengthen the real pressure put upon the subject by the universal, its negation. The chasm between the two yawns the more visibly, the more concretely the subject is confronted with the thesis of the objective substantiality of morals.

In Hegel's late conception of education, this is described only as something hostile to the subject:

Absolutely defined, education is thus deliverance and the work on a higher deliverance, namely, the absolute point of transition to the infinitely subjective substantiality of morals, which is no longer immediate and natural but spiritual and likewise raised to the form of universality. In the subject, this deliverance is the toil of striving against mere subjectivity of conduct, against immediate desire, as well as against the subjective vanity of sensation and the arbitrariness of liking. That it is this toil accounts for part of the disfavour it encounters. But it is by this educational toil that subjective volition gains in itself the objectivity which alone makes it worthy and capable of being the reality of the idea.²³

Embroidering this is *ὁ μὴ δαρεῖς*, the Greek school maxim which Goethe – whom it fitted least of all – did not disdain to choose as a Hegelian-minded motto for his autobiography. Yet in trumpeting the truth about the identity it would like first to bring about, the classicist maxim admits its own untruth: literally that of birch-rod pedagogy, and metaphorically that of the unspeakable commandment to submit. Being immanently untrue, the maxim is unfit for the purpose entrusted to it; psychology, belittled by the great philosophy, knows more about that than philosophy knows. Brutality is reproduced by men against whom it is practised; the abused are not educated but repressed, rebarbarized. An insight of psychoanalysis – that civilization's repressive mechanisms transform the libido into aggression against civilization – cannot be extinguished any more. The man who has been educated by force will channel his aggressions by identifying with force, to pass it on and get rid of it; it is thus that subject and object are really identified according to the educational ideal of Hegel's philosophy of law. If a culture is no culture, it does not even want the people who are caught in its mill to be cultured.

In one of the most famous passages of *Philosophy of Law*, Hegel cites a line attributed to Pythagoras, to the effect that the best way morally to educate a son is to make him a citizen of a state with good laws.²⁴ This calls for a judgment whether the state itself and its laws are actually good. But to Hegel, order is good *a priori*; it does not have to answer to those living under it. Ironically, this confirms his subsequent Aristotelian reminiscence that 'substantial unity is an absolute and motionless end in itself'.²⁵ Motionless, the end stands in the dialectic that is supposed to produce it. It is thus devalued to an empty avowal that 'freedom comes to its supreme right'²⁶ in the state; Hegel lapses into that insipid edification which he still despised in *Phenomenology*. He reiterates a cogitative cliché of Antiquity, from the stage at which philosophy's victorious Platonic-

Aristotelian mainstream proclaimed its solidarity with the institutions, against their bases in the social process; all in all, mankind discovered society much later than the state, which is mediated as such but seems given and immediate to the governed.

Hegel's line 'Whatever man is he owes to the state',²⁷ that most obvious hyperbole, carries on the antiquated confusion. What induced the thesis is that the 'motionlessness' he attributes to the general purpose might indeed be predicated of the institution, once it has hardened, but could not possibly be predicated of society, which is dynamic in essence. The dialectician confirms the state's prerogative to be above dialectics because – a matter he did not delude himself about – dialectics will drive men beyond bourgeois society. He does not put his trust in dialectics, does not look upon it as the force to cure itself, and disavows his own assurance that identity will produce itself in dialectics.

Notes

1. Hegel, *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, 5th ed., Hamburg, 1955, p. 60.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 48.
4. Hegel, *Works (Jubilaumsausgabe)*, Stuttgart, 1927ff, 7, p. 230.
5. Hegel, *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, p. 77.
6. Ibid., p. 78.
7. Ibid., p. 115.
8. Ibid., p. 60.
9. Ibid., p. 95.
10. Ibid., p. 60.
11. Among the positivists it was in Emile Durkheim's doctrine of collective spirit that Hegel's choice in favour of the universal was maintained and topped, if possible; in Durkheim's schema there is no more room for a dialectic of universal and particular even in the abstract. In the sociology of primitive religions, Durkheim made the substantial discovery that qualities, the things the particular is boasting of, have been imposed upon it by the universal. He designated to the universal both the delusion of the particular, as a mere mimesis, and the power that makes a particular of it in the first place: 'Le deuil (qui s'exprime au cours de certaines cérémonies) n'est pas un mouvement naturel de la sensibilité privée, froissée par une perte cruelle; c'est un devoir imposé par le groupe. On se lamente, non pas simplement parce qu'on est triste, mais parce qu'on est tenu de se lamenter. C'est une attitude rituelle qu'on est obligé d'adopter par respect pour l'usage, mais qui est, dans une large mesure, indépendante de l'état effectif des individus. Cette obligation est, d'ailleurs, sanctionnée par des peines ou mythiques ou sociales' (Emile Durkheim, *Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse: le système totémique en Australie*. Paris, 1912. *Travaux de l'Année sociologique*, p. 568).
12. Hegel, *Works* 5, p. 43f.
13. Hegel, *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, p. 59f.
14. Ibid., p. 105.
15. Cf. esp. Part One, Being and Existence.

16. Hegel, *Works* 7, p. 231.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 32ff. The cliché 'only an idea' had already been criticized by Kant. 'The Platonic republic has become proverbial as a supposedly striking instance of imagined perfection, which can be located only in an idle thinker's brain. . . . One would do better, however, to pursue this thought some more, and (where the excellent man leaves us without assistance) to illuminate it by new efforts instead of putting it aside as useless, on the very wretched and harmful pretext that it is unfeasible' (Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, *Works* III, p. 247).
18. 'Time does not pass, but the existence of changeable things passes in it. Since time itself is immutable and enduring, what corresponds to it in phenomenality is the immutable in existence, i.e. substance, and it is by this alone that we can determine the sequence and simultaneity of the phenomena in time' (Kant, *ibid.*, p. 137).
19. 'More closely, then, the real I itself belongs to time, with which – if we abstract from the concrete content of consciousness and self-consciousness – it coincides, being nothing but this empty motion of positing myself as something other and voiding this change, i.e. preserving therein myself, the I, and only the I as such. I is in time, and time is the being of the subject' (Hegel, *Works* 14, p. 151).
20. Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, Berlin 1953, p 73f.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
22. Hegel, *Works* 7, p. 336.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 268f.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 235.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 329.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Hegel, *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, p. 111.

Extract from *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1968)

Jürgen Habermas

Hegel's critique of Kant: radicalization or abolition of the Theory of Knowledge

Hegel replaced the enterprise of epistemology with the phenomenological self-reflection of mind. He introduces the *Phenomenology of Mind* with an argument that returns in later contexts.¹ The critical philosophy (*Kritizismus*)² demands that the knowing subject ascertain the conditions of the knowledge of which it is in principle capable before trusting its directly acquired cognitions. Only on the basis of reliable criteria of the validity of our judgments can we determine whether we may also be certain with regard to our knowledge. But if this critique itself must claim to be knowledge, how can we critically investigate the cognitive faculty prior to knowing?

What is demanded is thus the following: we should know the cognitive faculty before we know. It is like wanting to swim before going in the water. The investigation of the faculty of knowledge is itself knowledge, and cannot arrive at its goal because it is this goal already.³

Every consistent epistemology is caught in this circle from the beginning. This cannot be avoided by beginning the critique with presuppositions that remain provisionally unproblematic but that in principle can be taken as potential problems for subsequent investigation. This 'problematic method', originally adopted by Reinhold, is still recommended today by positivists for methodological investigations. It is argued that one cannot at the same time take all principles as problematic. The set of presuppositions that defines the frame of reference of a given investigation should be assumed as unproblematic for the course of investigation. The manifold repetition of this procedure is supposed to provide an adequate

guarantee that in principle all presuppositions can be called into question. However, the choice of the first frame of reference and the sequence of the additional stages of investigation remain arbitrary. Radical doubt is excluded, because the procedure rests on a conventionalism that precludes the logical foundation of its premises. But the theory of knowledge, according to its philosophical claim, is an enterprise directed at the whole. It is concerned with the critical justification of the conditions of possible knowledge in general. It cannot renounce radical, that is unconditional doubt. The methodical (*methodisch*)⁴ meaning of its approach would be inverted if it bound critique to conditions (that is if it allowed presuppositions) that are themselves the preconditions of the critique of knowledge without being subject to it. Because epistemology, in virtue of its claim to providing its own and the ultimate foundation, appears as the heir of First Philosophy (*Ursprungsphilosophie*),⁵ it cannot dispense with the strategy of beginning without presuppositions.⁶ This explains how Hegel can praise Reinhold, who clearly perceived the circular character of epistemology, while rejecting the problematic method that was to escape it. His 'correct insight does not alter the character of such a method, but immediately expresses its inadequacy'.⁷

Hegel's argument is conclusive. It is directed against the intention of First Philosophy. For the circle in which epistemology inevitably ensnares itself is a reminder that the critique of knowledge does not possess the spontaneity of an origin. As reflection it is instead dependent on something prior and given, which it takes as its object while simultaneously originating in it. Thus the critique of knowledge is condemned to being after the fact. It begins with data of consciousness that it first confronts empirically. But the choice of a starting point is not conventional. Sense-certainty is the name of the natural consciousness of a world of everyday life which we always find ourselves already inside, with inevitable contingency. Sense-certainty is objective in the sense that the recollecting power of reflection itself originates in this stratum of experience, whose dogmatic character it unmasks. In reflection consciousness cannot make anything transparent except the context of its own genesis. The circle that Hegel charges to epistemology as a bad contradiction is justified in phenomenological experience as the form of reflection itself. It pertains to the structure of self-knowledge that one must have known in order to know explicitly. Only something already known can be remembered as a result and comprehended in its genesis. This movement is the experience of reflection. Its goal is that knowledge which the critical philosophy asserted as an immediate possession.

If this is so, then the critique of knowledge can no longer claim to fulfil the intention of First Philosophy. But it is not at all clear why abandoning this intention should entail abandoning the critique of knowledge itself. The latter has only to cast off its false consciousness by being

turned against itself in metacritique. Hegel, however, believes that his argument affects not only this false consciousness but the epistemological approach as such:

Meanwhile, if concern with falling into error creates mistrust in science, which goes to work without such misgivings and attains real knowledge, then it is not clear why conversely there should not be mistrust of this mistrust and why there should not be concern that this fear of erring is not error itself. In fact this fear presupposes many beliefs as true and bases its misgivings and conclusions on them. It is these presuppositions themselves that first need to be examined as to their truth.⁸

Hegel rightly criticizes the unacknowledged presuppositions of epistemology. However, his demand that these, too, be subjected to critique accords with the strategy of unconditional doubt. Thus his argument cannot limit the mistrust expressed by the critical philosophy, which is the modern form of scepticism. Instead, it can only radicalize it. Phenomenology would have to reconstruct the standpoint of doubt (*Zweifel*) adopted by epistemology as the beaten path of despair (*Verzweiflung*). Hegel sees this; yet he asserts in the same breath that the fear of erring is error itself. Hence what starts out as immanent critique covertly turns into abstract negation. It is through the epistemological circle that the theory of knowledge can cure its false consciousness and be brought to consciousness of itself as reflection. Hegel, however, takes this circle as a sign of the untruth of the critical philosophy as such. He sees through the absolutism of an epistemology based on unreflected presuppositions, demonstrates the mediation of reflection by what precedes it, and thus destroys the renewal of First Philosophy on the basis of transcendentalism. Yet in so doing he imagines himself to be overcoming the critique of knowledge as such. This opinion insinuates itself because from the very beginning Hegel presumes as given a knowledge of the Absolute while indeed the possibility of just this knowledge would have to be demonstrated according to the criteria of a radicalized critique of knowledge.

Accordingly there is something half-hearted about the *Phenomenology of Mind*. The standpoint of absolute knowledge is to proceed with immanent necessity from phenomenological experience. But because it is absolute, it does not really need to be justified by the phenomenological self-reflection of mind; and, strictly speaking, it is not even capable of such justification. This equivocation of the phenomenology of mind deprives Hegel's critique of Kant of the force that it would have needed in order to put forward a reflected theory of knowledge. The theory of transcendental philosophy itself has not held its ground against its positivist opponents.

Hegel directs himself against the organon⁹ theory of knowledge. Those who conceive of the enterprise of the critique of knowledge as an examination of the means of knowledge start with a model of knowledge that emphasizes either the activity of the knowing subject or the receptivity of the cognitive process. Knowledge appears mediated either by an *instrument* with whose help we form objects or as a *medium* through which the light of the world enters the subject.¹⁰ Both versions accord in viewing knowledge as transcendently determined by the means of possible knowledge. The model of knowing as a medium through which the state of fact, which is true in itself, manifests itself in refraction makes clear that even the contemplative self-understanding of theory, when examined from the viewpoint of the critique of knowledge, must be reinterpreted along the lines of an organon theory of knowledge. For Hegel the task of the critical philosophy appears as one of ascertaining the functions of the instrument or medium in order to be able to distinguish the inevitable contributions of the subject from the authentic objective content in the judgment that is the result of the cognitive process. The objection to this then lies at hand:

If we remove from a formed thing what the instrument has done to it, then the thing – in this case the Absolute – is once again just what it was before this exertion, which thus was superfluous. . . . Or if the examination of knowing, which we represent to ourselves as a *medium* [instead of as the functioning of an instrument – Jürgen Habermas], makes us acquainted with the law of its refraction, it is just as useless to us to deduct it from the result. For knowing is not the refraction of the ray, but the ray itself through which truth reaches us.¹¹

This objection is obviously valid only presupposing that there can be something like knowledge in itself or absolute knowledge independent of the subjective conditions of possible knowledge. Hegel imputes to epistemology a privative concept of subjectively tinged knowledge that can in fact only arise in confrontation with Hegel's own concept of absolute knowledge. However, for a critical philosophy that does not fear its own implications, there can be no concept of knowledge that can be explicated independently of the subjective conditions of the objectivity of possible knowledge: this is shown by Kant's principle of the synthetic unity of apperception as the highest principle of all employment of the understanding. Of course, we can feign the idea of a mode of knowledge that is not 'ours', but we associate a meaning with this idea only to the extent that we derive it as a limiting concept from a variation of knowledge that is possible 'for us'. It remains derivative and cannot itself serve as a standard according to which we could relativize that from which it is derived. Transcendental philosophy's conception of knowledge

mediated by an organon implies that the frame of reference within which the objects of knowledge are at all possible is first constituted by the functions of the instrument. The idea that Hegel imputes to transcendental philosophy, namely, 'that the Absolute is located on one side and knowing, located on the other, is still something real by itself and in separation from the Absolute' – this idea belongs rather to Hegel's own frame of reference. For Hegel is referring to the absolute relation of subject and object. In this relation a mediating organon of knowledge can in fact be thought of only as the cause of subjective interference and not as the condition of the possible objectivity of knowledge. For critical philosophy it is otherwise. The organon produces the world within which reality can appear at all; thus under these conditions of its functioning it can always only disclose reality and not obscure it. Only presupposing that reality as such simply appears can this or that individual real element be obscured – unless we presume an absolute relation between reality and the cognitive process that is independent of that instrument. But from the presuppositions of transcendental philosophy we cannot even meaningfully talk of knowledge without identifying the conditions of possible knowledge. Accordingly Hegel's critique does not proceed immanently. For his objection to the organon theory of knowledge presupposes just what this theory calls into question: the possibility of absolute knowledge.

On the other hand, Hegel's critique also has its justifications. Unfolding the two cognitive models of the instrument and the medium brings to light *a series of implicit presuppositions* of a critique of knowledge that claims to be free of presuppositions. The latter must always already know more than it can know according to its own stated premises. The critique that knows knowledge to be mediated by an organon must include specific ideas both about the knowing subject and the category of correct knowledge. For Kant reconstructs the organization of the cognitive faculty, as the essential unity of the transcendental conditions under which knowledge is possible, by starting with *a priori* valid propositions and with an ego for which the validity of propositions exists. Already in our approach we secretly base the critique of knowledge on a specific concept of science and of the knowing subject. However, the only presupposition that modern scepticism will allow is the project of not accepting the thoughts of others on authority, but instead of examining everything oneself and autonomously following one's own conviction. The only thing standing at the beginning of critique is the radical project of unconditional doubt. From Descartes to Kant this doubt required no justification because it legitimated itself as an aspect of reason. And correspondingly consciousness that criticizes itself does not need to be trained in methodical doubt, because the latter is the medium in which consciousness constitutes itself as consciousness that is certain of itself. These are assertions claiming

self-evidence that are no longer convincing today as basic assumptions of rationalism. Radical doubt that needs to be neither justified nor learned through practice is no longer conceded a transcendental role. At most it has a place in cognitive psychology. In recent philosophy of science, therefore, methodical doubt has been replaced by a critical attitude that is committed to the principles of rationalism but cannot itself be justified.¹² Rationalism is supposedly a method of belief, one opinion among others. Unaltered, however, is its function in the presuppositionless beginning of the critique of knowledge and thus for an absolutist self-understanding that transcendental philosophy shares with today's methodology. To the abstract resolve of unconditional doubt Hegel opposes a self-completing scepticism:

The series of shapes that consciousness passes through on this course is . . . the complete history of the *self-formation* of consciousness into science. In the simple manner appropriate to it, that resolve presupposes this self-formation as immediately settled and completed. Against this untruth, however, this course of formation is the real accomplishment.¹³

Epistemology presumes to take nothing for granted except its pure project of radically doubting. In truth it bases itself on a critical consciousness that is the result of an entire process of self-formation. Thus it is the beneficiary of a stage of reflection that it does not admit and therefore also cannot legitimate.

The first presupposition with which epistemology begins is a normative concept of science. It takes a given, specific category of knowledge as prototypical knowledge. Characteristically, in the Preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant resorts to the examples of mathematics and contemporary physics. Both disciplines are distinguished by what appears to be relatively constant cognitive progress. They fulfil a criterion that Kant cloaks in the stereotyped phrase of the 'sure march of science'. In contrast, other disciplines, which have falsely claimed the name of science, are characterized by groping around with mere concepts. This includes metaphysics; measured against the pragmatic mark of cognitive progress, its method is without success. That is why Kant would like 'us to undertake a complete revolution in it after the example of the geometers and natural scientists'. From the very start the enterprise of a critique of pure speculative reason assumes the normative cogency of a *specific* category of knowledge. Presupposing that the statements of mathematics and contemporary physics are valid as reliable knowledge, the critique of knowledge can take principles that have proved themselves in these processes of inquiry and use them to draw conclusions about the organization of our cognitive faculty. It is true that Kant feels psychologically encouraged

by the example of the natural scientists, who have understood that reason only comprehends what it itself produces according to its own plan, to transform metaphysics according to the same principle. But over and above this he depends systematically on this example, because the critique of knowledge only seems to be free from presuppositions. In fact it must begin with a prior, undemonstrated criterion of the validity of scientific statements, which nevertheless is accepted as cogent.

Modern methodology, too, gains pseudo-normative force by first taking a particular category of traditional knowledge as the prototype of science. It then generalizes the procedures that make possible the reconstruction of this knowledge and converts them into a definition of science. Hegel opposes this by insisting that knowledge which first *presents itself* as science is primarily a manifestation of knowledge (*erscheinende Wissen*)¹⁴ – one barren assurance is just as valid as another. Nor is science as it first manifests itself any more worthy of belief because we place our confidence in the claim that it is authentic or true science and decide against other forms of knowledge that appear with the same claim. The critique of knowledge must begin by abstaining from any prejudgment about what is to count as science. At first it confronts only competing claims of the manifestation of knowledge. That is why it has to abandon itself to the course taken by this knowledge in its manifestations:

Scepticism directed at the entire compass of consciousness in its manifestations first makes . . . the mind skilled at examining what truth is. It does so by creating despair of so-called natural ideas, thoughts and opinions. It is a matter of indifference whether one calls these one's own or others'. The very consciousness that is to examine truth is still so filled with and caught in these ideas that it is in fact incapable of undertaking what it wants to.¹⁵

As the representation of knowledge in its manifestations the critique of knowledge takes up the thread of phenomenological experience in the everyday life-world in the formations that natural consciousness has given itself and in which we find ourselves:

When knowledge in its manifestations becomes our object, its determinations are first taken up as they immediately present themselves; and they surely present themselves as they have just been formulated.¹⁶

Epistemological investigation does not thereby regress to the dogmatism of common sense. For now its critique is directed so unsparingly even against itself that the standards that it uses for examination cannot simply be presupposed. By reconstructing the self-formative process of con-

sciousness, the critique of knowledge observes how at every stage the standards of the preceding one disintegrate and new ones arise.

In this enterprise *the second presupposition* with which the critique of knowledge begins also becomes problematic: namely, the assumption of a complete, fixed knowing subject or, in other words, a normative concept of the ego. In order that judgment be passed on the errors through which reason had become at odds with itself in its trans-empirical employment, Kant wanted to institute a tribunal. He had no second thoughts about the genesis of the court. For nothing seemed more certain to him than the self-consciousness in which I am given to myself as the 'I think' that accompanies all of my representations. Even if the transcendental unity of self-consciousness can only be comprehended in the actual course of the investigation as arising from the activities of original apperception, the identity of the ego must already be taken account of at its beginning on the basis of the undoubted transcendental experience of self-reflection. In contrast, Hegel perceives that Kant's critique of consciousness commences with a consciousness that is not transparent to itself. The observing consciousness of phenomenology knows that it itself is incorporated in the experience of reflection as one of its elements. Beginning with natural consciousness, its genesis must be reconstructed up to the point of view provisionally taken by the phenomenological observer. Then the position of the critique of knowledge can coincide with the constituted self-consciousness of a consciousness that has become aware of its own self-formative process; only in this way can it be purified of all that is contingent. For the consciousness that is about to begin the task of examination, the subject of epistemological investigation is not yet at hand. It is first given to itself only with the result of its self-ascertainment.

A critique of knowledge that has dissolved the normative conception of both science and the ego in radical thought is relegated exclusively to what Hegel calls *phenomenological experience*. The latter moves in the medium of a consciousness that reflexively distinguishes between itself, for which an object is given, and the being-in-itself of the object. The transition from the native intuition of the object-in-itself (*ansichseiend*)¹⁷ to the reflexive knowledge that this being-in-itself exists for it (consciousness) enables consciousness to have a specific experience of itself via its object. This experience first exists only for us, the phenomenological observers:

It is the *genesis* of the new object, which presents itself to consciousness without the latter knowing how this occurs, that for us appears to take place, so to speak, behind its back. In this way a moment of *being-in-itself* or *being-for-us* enters into its movement; yet this moment does not present itself to the consciousness that is itself engaged in the experience. But the *content* of what originates for us exists *for it*, and

we comprehend only its formal element or its pure genesis. This result of genesis exists *for it* only as object, whereas *for us* it is at the same time movement and becoming.¹⁸

The dimensions of *in itself*, *for it* and *for us* designate the co-ordinate system in which the experience of reflection moves. But during the experiential process the values change in all dimensions, including the third. The phenomenologist's perspective, from which the path of knowledge in its manifestations presents itself 'for us', can only be adopted in anticipation until this perspective itself is produced in phenomenological experience. 'We', too, are drawn into the process of reflection, which at each of its levels is characterized anew by a 'reversal of consciousness'.

The *last* implicit *presupposition* with which an abstract critique of knowledge begins, however, thereby shows itself to be untenable: the distinction between theoretical and practical reason. The critique of pure reason assumes a different concept of the ego from that of practical reason: the ego as the unity of self-consciousness versus the ego as free will. The separation of the critique of knowledge from a critique of rational action is considered self-evident. Yet this distinction becomes problematical if critical consciousness itself emerges only from the history of the development of consciousness. Then it is an element, even if the last one, in a self-formative process in which at every stage a new insight is confirmed in a new attitude. For reflection destroys, along with a false view of things, the dogmatic attitudes of a habitual form of life: this holds even for the first stage, the world of sense-certainty. In false consciousness, knowing and willing are still joined. The residues of the destructions of false consciousness serve as rungs on the ladder of the experience of reflection. As shown by the prototypical area of experience in life history, the experiences from which one learns are negative. The reversal of consciousness means the dissolution of identifications, the breaking of fixations and the destruction of projections. The failure of the state of consciousness that has been overcome turns at the same time into a new reflected attitude in which the situation comes to consciousness in an undistorted manner, just as it is. This is the path of determinate negation that guards against empty scepticism, 'which always sees only *pure nothingness* in the result and abstracts from the circumstance that this nothingness is determined as the nothingness of *that from which* it results'.¹⁹ In clarifying what the reversal of consciousness means, Hegel repeats

that the result obtained from a non-veridical instance of knowledge cannot shrink to an empty nothingness but must be apprehended necessarily as the nothingness of *that of which it is the result*: a result that contains that which was true in the preceding instance of knowledge.²⁰

This figure of determinate negation applies not to an immanent logical connection but to the mechanism of the progress of a mode of reflection in which theoretical and practical reason are one. The affirmative moment that is contained in the very negation of an existing organization of consciousness becomes plausible when we consider that in this consciousness categories of apprehending the world and norms of action are connected. A *form of life* that has become an abstraction cannot be negated without leaving a trace, or overthrown without practical consequences. The revolutionized situation contains the one that has been surpassed, because the insight of the new consists precisely in the experience of revolutionary release from the old consciousness. Because the relation between successive states of a system is brought about by what is in this sense determinate negation and not by either a logical or a causal relation, we speak of a self-formative process. A state defined by both cognitive performances and fixed attitudes can be overcome only if its genesis is analytically remembered. A past state, if cut off and merely repressed, would retain its power over the present. The relation described, however, secures continuity to a moral life context that is destroyed again at each new level of reflection. It makes possible a sustaining identity of the 'mind' (*Geist*) in the succession of abandoned identifications. This identity of the mind becomes conscious as a dialectical one. It contains *within* itself the distinction confidently presupposed by epistemology and cannot be defined in relation to this distinction between theoretical and practical reason.

Hegel radicalizes the approach of the critique of knowledge by subjecting its presuppositions to self-criticism. In so doing he destroys the secure foundation of transcendental consciousness, from which the *a priori* demarcation between transcendental and empirical determinations, between genesis and validity, seemed certain. Phenomenological experience moves in a dimension within which transcendental determinations themselves take form. It contains no absolutely fixed point. Only the experience of reflection as such can be elucidated under the name of self-formative process. Critical consciousness, after initially hastening forward, must work itself up to its present position through stages of reflection that can be reconstructed through a systematic repetition of the experiences that constituted the history of mankind. The *Phenomenology of Mind* attempts this reconstruction in three progressions: through the socialization process of the individual, through the universal history of mankind, and through this history as it reflects upon itself in the forms of absolute mind, that is religion, art and scientific knowledge (*Wissenschaft*).²¹

The critical consciousness with which the theory of knowledge begins its examination is obtained as the result of phenomenological observation as soon as the latter becomes transparently aware of the genesis of its

own standpoint by appropriating the self-formative process of the human species. Now Hegel asserts at the end of the *Phenomenology of the Mind* that this critical consciousness is absolute knowledge. Hegel did not make good this assertion; indeed, he could not even carry out such a demonstration because he did not satisfy the formal conditions of a phenomenological passage through the history of nature. For in accordance with the approach of phenomenological investigation, absolute knowledge would be conceivable only as the result of a systematic repetition of the formative processes of the human species *and nature at once*.

Now it is not really probable that such a simple 'mistake' could have crept into Hegel's thought. If, disregarding the preceding argument, he never entertained a doubt that the phenomenology of mind led, and had to lead, to the standpoint of absolute knowledge and thence to the concept of speculative scientific knowledge, it is rather an indication of a self-understanding of phenomenology that deviates from our interpretation. Through phenomenological investigation Hegel believes himself not to be radicalizing the epistemological approach but to be making it superfluous. He presumes that phenomenological experience always keeps and has kept within the medium of an absolute movement of the mind and therefore must terminate necessarily in absolute knowledge.²² In contrast, we have followed his argument from the point of view of an immanent critique of Kant. If we are not guided by the presupposition of the philosophy of identity, the fateful union dissolves. True, Hegel's construction of consciousness in its manifestations, by radicalizing the epistemological approach, dispels transcendental philosophy's limitation of what merely seems to be unconditional doubt. But in no way does it guarantee us access to any sort of absolute knowledge. Unlike empirical experience, phenomenological experience does not keep within the bounds of transcendently grounded schemata. Rather, the construction of consciousness in its manifestations incorporates the fundamental experiences in which transformations of such schemata of apprehending the world and of action themselves have been deposited. The experience of reflection preserves those outstanding moments in which the subject looks back over its own shoulder, so to speak, and perceives how the transcendental relation between subject and object alters itself behind its back. It recollects the emancipation thresholds of the history of mankind. However, this does not exclude contingent impacts upon the transcendental history of consciousness. Under contingent circumstances, the conditions under which any new transcendental framework for the appearance of possible objects is formed could be produced by the subject itself: for example, through progress in the forces of production, as Marx assumes. This would not bring about an absolute unity of subject and object. Only such a unity, however, would confer upon critical conscious-

ness, in which phenomenological recollection culminates, the status of absolute knowledge.

Notwithstanding, Hegel advocated this view in 1807.

By urging itself on to its true existence [in the course of phenomenological experience], it [consciousness] will attain a point at which it casts off its appearance of being affected with what is different from it, with what is only for it and as something other than itself, or where appearance becomes identical with essence, so that the description of consciousness coincides with this very point of the authentic scientific knowledge of mind; and finally, by apprehending this its own essence, it will express absolute knowledge itself.²³

But already here a contradiction appears that is masked only rhetorically. If it is phenomenology that first produces the standpoint of absolute knowledge, and this standpoint coincides with the position of authentic scientific knowledge, then the construction of knowledge in its manifestations cannot itself claim the status of scientific knowledge. The apparent dilemma (*Aporie*) of knowing *before* knowledge, with which Hegel reproached epistemology, now returns in Hegel's thought as an actual dilemma: namely, that phenomenology must in fact be valid prior to every possible mode of scientific knowledge. Hegel first published the *Phenomenology* as the first part of a system of scientific knowledge. At that time he was convinced that the forms in which consciousness appeared followed one another with necessity, and 'through this necessity this road to scientific knowledge is itself already *scientific knowledge*'.²⁴ Yet Hegel could claim necessity for the progression of phenomenological experience only *retrospectively* from the standpoint of absolute knowledge. Seen from this perspective the relation of the phenomenology of mind to logic takes the following form:

Consciousness is mind as concrete knowledge, which is, moreover, knowledge affected with externality. But, like the development of all natural and mental life, the forward movement of this object is based exclusively on the nature of the *pure essences* that make up the content of logic. As mind in its manifestations, which frees itself in this way from its immediacy and external concretion, consciousness becomes pure knowledge, which gives itself as an object these pure essences themselves, as they are in and for themselves.²⁵

From this point of view, however, phenomenological investigation would lose its specific character and be reduced to the level of a metaphysical philosophy of mind and nature (*Realphilosophie des Geistes*).²⁶ If the progressive phenomenological movement of consciousness, like 'all

natural and mental life', were based on the logical structure of essences existing in and for themselves, then precisely the special relation that enables phenomenology to be an introduction to philosophy would be neglected: namely, that the phenomenological observer, who cannot yet have attained the standpoint of logic, is himself incorporated in the self-formative process of consciousness. His dependent position is shown in that he must begin with sense-certainty, which is something immediate.

Phenomenology does not depict the developmental process of mind, but rather the appropriation of this process by a consciousness that must first free itself from external concretion and attain pure knowledge through the experience of reflection. Thus it cannot itself already be scientific knowledge and yet must be able to claim scientific validity.

This ambiguity remains. We need to ground the concept of science phenomenologically only as long as we are not certain of the conditions of possible knowledge – or, possibly, of absolute knowledge. To this extent the method of phenomenological experience only radicalizes what was always the intention of the critique of knowledge. On the other hand, when phenomenology truly attains its declared goal, absolute knowledge, it makes itself superfluous. Indeed, it refutes the perspective of inquiry held by the critique of knowledge as such, although this perspective is its only legitimation. At best, then, we may regard phenomenology as a ladder which we must throw away after climbing it to the standpoint of the Logic. In a certain sense Hegel himself later also treated the *Phenomenology* in this way. He did not incorporate it into his system of the sciences. In its place in the *Encyclopaedia* appears a so-called preliminary notion (*Vorbegriff*) of the science of logic.²⁷ Yet in the autumn of 1831 Hegel began preparations for a second edition of the *Phenomenology* and made a note for himself reading, 'Unusual early work, not to be revised'. He obviously wanted to retain the phenomenology in its old form but for the same function as the new preliminary notion of the Logic and place it alongside the system as a whole. In this way scientific knowledge, which is expounded as a system, could explain its standpoint in relation to a consciousness that is still outside the system and that must still be motivated to decide to want to think purely.²⁸ As this sort of self-interpretation of science, which comprehends the necessity of a consciousness caught in appearance, phenomenology would have to evolve its thought process from the standpoint of speculative scientific knowledge. But it could do this only didactically and not scientifically. This later self-understanding of phenomenology rests on a reinterpretation of its original intention. Nevertheless Hegel could carry it out without violence, owing to the ambiguity that was always attached to phenomenology. It had to assume as uncertain the standpoint of absolute knowledge to which it was supposed to give rise and to which it could give rise only by radicalizing the critique of knowledge. Yet in fact it

presupposed absolute knowledge with such certainty that it believed itself exempted from the labour of this critique from its first step.

Kant's critique of knowledge accepts an empirical concept of science in the form of contemporary physics and derives from it the criteria of possible science in general. Hegel shows that the critique of knowledge, if it unconditionally follows its own intention, must abandon such presuppositions; instead it must let the standard of critique emerge from the experience of reflection. Because he does not proceed logically but relativizes the critique of knowledge as such according to the presuppositions of the philosophy of identity, Hegel arrives at the concept of speculative scientific knowledge. In relation to this norm, sciences that proceed methodically, whether of nature or mind, can only prove themselves to be limitations of absolute knowledge and discredit themselves. Thus the paradoxical result of an *ambiguous radicalization of the critique of knowledge* is not an enlightened position of philosophy with regard to science. When philosophy asserts itself as authentic science, the relation of philosophy and science completely disappears from discussion. It is with Hegel that a fatal misunderstanding arises: the idea that the claim asserted by philosophical reason against the abstract thought of mere understanding is equivalent to the usurpation of the legitimacy of independent sciences by a philosophy claiming to retain its position as universal scientific knowledge. But the actual fact of scientific progress independent of philosophy had to unmask this claim, however misunderstood, as bare fiction. It was this that served as the foundation-stone of positivism. Only Marx could have contested its victory. For he pursued Hegel's critique of Kant without sharing the basic assumption of the philosophy of identity that hindered Hegel from unambiguously radicalizing the critique of knowledge.

Notes

1. See Hegel's 'Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie', in Georg W. F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Hermann Glockner (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1949–59), 19:555ff., and the *Enzyklopädie* of 1830, ed. Friedrich Nicolai and Otto Pöggeler (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1959), pp. 43ff.

2. Translator's note: 'the critical philosophy' means Kantianism.

3. 'Vorlesungen', pp. 555f.

4. Translator's note: in the text 'methodical' (*methodisch*) means 'relating to or by means of method', while 'methodological' (*methodologisch*) means 'relating to methodology, the study of method'.

5. Translator's note: *Ursprungsphilosophie*, literally 'philosophy of the origin', means philosophy that attempts to provide a self-contained deduction of the world and itself from an original principle or ground. It has been translated as 'First Philosophy'.

6. Theodor W. Adorno, *Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1956), Introduction, especially pp. 14ff.

7. *Enzyklopädie*, pp. 43f.

8. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1948), pp. 64f.

9. Translator's note: 'organon': an instrument of thought or knowledge; the title given to Aristotle's logical writings.

10. The instrumental view of the cognitive process provides Hegel with the guide to an interpretation of Kant's critique of reason that amazingly anticipates pragmatist conceptions. See especially 'Vorlesungen', p. 555. 'Knowledge is represented as an instrument . . . before proceeding towards truth itself, the nature and form of the instrument is first supposed to be known. It is active; we are supposed to examine whether it is capable of achieving what is demanded: seizing the object. . . . It is as though one could attack the truth with stakes and pikes.' The transcendental aesthetic can then be interpreted instrumentally, as follows:

The matter is conceived as follows. Outside there are things in themselves, but without time and space. Now consciousness comes and in advance contains within itself time and space as the possibility of experience, just as, in order to eat, it has a mouth, teeth etc. as the conditions of eating. The things that are eaten do not have the mouth and teeth; and what eating does to things, space and time does to them. Just as consciousness puts things between its mouth and teeth, so it does with space and time.

(ibid., p. 563)

Since 'instruments' of organic constitution are used as an example here, this passage already contains points of departure for the pragmatism of an anthropological theory of cognition, expanded to the level of the history of the species. See the epistemological discussion in Konrad Lorenz's paper, 'Gestaltwahrnehmung als Quelle wissenschaftlicher Erkenntnis', in his *Gesammelte Abhandlungen* (Munich, 1966), 2:255ff.

11. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 64.

12. Karl Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

13. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, pp. 67f.

14. Translator's note: *das erscheinende Wissen* literally means 'appearing knowledge', that is knowledge as it appears or manifests itself. The text refers even more frequently to *das erscheinende Bewußtsein*, 'appearing consciousness', which has been translated as 'consciousness in its manifestations'.

15. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 68.

16. ibid., pp. 70f.

17. Translator's note: to preserve continuity with the conceptual scheme of Kant and Hegel, *ansichseiend* has been translated as '(being-) in-itself', meaning self-existent independently of consciousness.

18. ibid., p. 74.

19. ibid., p. 68.

20. ibid., p. 74.

21. Georg Lukács, *Der junge Hegel* (Zurich: Europa, 1948), pp. 592ff. Translator's note: *Wissenschaft* means 'science' in the sense of systematic, objective knowledge. While in most cases it is adequately rendered by 'science', it has been translated as 'scientific knowledge' in contexts dealing with Hegel's philosophy

owing to the great difference between Hegel's meaning and the conventional meaning of science.

22. Hegel later endorsed this view at several points: 'In the *Phenomenology of Mind* . . . I have presented consciousness in its progressive motion from the first immediate antithesis between itself and its object to absolute knowledge. This course is followed by all forms of the *relation of consciousness to the object* and has the *concept of scientific knowledge* as its result. Thus this concept needs no justification here (disregarding the fact that it emerges within logic itself), because it has obtained it in the *Phenomenology*. And it is incapable of any justification other than this, its own production by consciousness, in which all its forms are resolved in truth.' 'Logik', Georg Lasson, ed., in *Sämtliche Werke*, Lasson, ed. (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1923), 3:29. See also 3:53.

23. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 75.

24. *ibid.*, p. 74.

25. *Logik*, 3:7.

26. In the *Encyclopaedia*, the term is indeed used in this sense. There (paragraphs 413–39) the phenomenology of mind refers to a stage in the development of subjective mind.

27. In Berlin, this preliminary notion, which occupied only a small space in the Heidelberg *Encyclopaedia*, was expanded by Hegel to more than sixty paragraphs. In a letter (*Briefe* 3:126), he writes, 'This introduction has become that much more difficult for me because it can be situated only prior to and not within philosophy itself.' See the Introduction to the new edition of the *Enzyklopädie*, *op. cit.*, pp. ixff.

28. This is the thesis of Hans Friedrich Fulda's penetrating study, *Das Problem einer Einleitung in Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1965).

Labour and interaction: Remarks on Hegel's Jena *Philosophy of Mind* (1967)

Jürgen Habermas

During 1803–04 and 1805–06, Hegel held lectures on the Philosophy of Nature and of Mind at Jena. The *Philosophy of Mind* is linked to the *System of Morality*, which was only worked out in a fragmentary manner. These works of Hegel¹ still are under the influence of the study of political economy which Hegel was pursuing at the time. Marxist studies of Hegel always have pointed to this fact.² In spite of this, the distinctive position of the Jena *Philosophy of Mind* within the Hegelian system has not till now received adequate consideration. The conception which Lasson set forth in the Preface to his edition of the Jena lectures continues to predominate: these works are regarded as a preparatory stage for the *Phenomenology*, and the parallels to the later system are emphasized. In contrast to this, I would like to present the thesis that in the two Jena lecture courses, Hegel offered a distinctive, systematic basis for the formative process of the spirit, which he later abandoned.

The categories language, tools and family designated three equally significant patterns of dialectical relation: symbolic representation, the labour process and interaction on the basis of reciprocity; each mediates subject and object in its own way. The dialectics of language, of labour and of moral relations are each developed as a specific configuration of mediation; what is involved are not stages constructed according to the same logical form, but diverse forms of construction itself. A radicalization of my thesis would read: it is not the spirit in the absolute movement of reflecting on itself which manifests itself in, among other things, language, labour and moral relationships, but rather, it is the dialectical interconnections between linguistic symbolization, labour and interaction which determine the concept of spirit. The locus within the Hegelian system of the categories named would speak against this; they do not appear in the *Logic* but in the *Realphilosophie*. On the other hand, at that time, the dialectical relations still adhere so sensuously [*anschaulich*]

to the basic patterns of heterogeneous experience that the logical forms diverge according to the material context from which they are drawn: externalization [*Entäusserung*] and alienation [*Entfremdung*], appropriation and reconciliation are not yet integrated. In any case, the tendency of the Jena lectures is that only the aggregate of the three dialectical patterns of existing consciousness can render spirit transparent in its structure.³

I

In the Introduction to the *Subjective Logic*, Hegel recalls to mind that concept of the 'I' in which his fundamental experience of the dialectic is contained:

'I' . . . is that initially pure unity relating to itself, and this it is not immediately, but in that it abstracts from all determinateness and content and, in the freedom of unlimited self-equality, passes back into itself. Thus it is universality; unity which is unity with itself only due to that negative comportment which appears as abstraction, and which therefore contains all the determinateness, dissolved within itself. Secondly, 'I' is singularity just as immediately as it is the negativity which relates to itself; it is absolute being-determinate which confronts the other and excludes it; individual personality. The nature of both the 'I' and the concept consists both of this absolute universality, which is just as immediately absolute singular individuation [*Vereinzelung*], and as a being-in-and-for-itself, which is simply being-positing, and which is this being-in-and-for-itself only through its unity with being-positing. Neither the 'I' nor the concept can be comprehended if the two above-mentioned moments are not conceived simultaneously in their abstraction and in their perfect unity.⁴

Hegel takes as his point of departure that concept of the 'I' which Kant had developed under the title of the original synthetic unity of apperception. There the 'I' is represented as the 'pure unity relating to itself', as the 'I think', which must be capable of accompanying all of my inner representations. This concept articulates the fundamental experience of the philosophy of reflection: namely, the experience of ego-identity in self-reflection, thus the experience of self of the knowing subject, which abstracts from all possible objects in the world, and refers back to itself as the sole object. The subjectivity of the 'I' is determined as reflection – it is the relation of the knowing subject to itself. In it the unity of the subject as self-consciousness constitutes itself. At the same time, Kant interprets this experience of self-reflection in terms of the

presuppositions of his theory of knowledge: he purifies the original apprehension, which is to guarantee the unity of transcendental consciousness, of all empirical contents.

Fichte furthers the reflection of self-reflection, *prior* to its distribution among the spheres, as the foundation of which it is, after all, to serve, father, and encounters the problem of the foundation [*Begründung*] – indeed of the ultimate foundation – of the ‘I’. In this he pursues the dialectic of the relation between the ‘I’ and the ‘other’ within the subjectivity of self-knowing.⁵ Hegel, on the other hand, confines himself to the dialectic of the ‘I’ and the ‘other’ within the framework of the intersubjectivity of spirit, in which the ‘I’ communicates not with itself as its ‘other’, but instead with another ‘I’ as its ‘other’.

The dialectic of Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre* of 1794, which is expressed in that the ‘I’ simply posits itself, remains confined within the condition of solitary reflection. As a *theory of self-consciousness*, it resolves the aporias of that relation in which the ‘I’ constitutes itself by knowing itself in terms of (*bei*) an ‘other’ identified as itself. Hegel’s dialectic of self-consciousness passes over the relation of solitary reflection in favour of the complementary relationship between individuals who know each other. The experience of self-consciousness is no longer considered the original one. Rather, for Hegel it results from the experience of interaction, in which I learn to see myself through the eyes of other subjects. The consciousness of myself is the derivation of the intersection [*Verschränkung*] of perspectives. Self-consciousness is formed only on the basis of mutual recognition; it must be tied to my being mirrored in the consciousness of another subject. That is why Hegel cannot answer the question of the origin of the identity of the ‘I’ as Fichte does, with a foundation of self-consciousness returning into itself, but solely with a *theory of spirit*. Then spirit is not the fundament underlying the subjectivity of the self in self-consciousness, but rather the medium *within* which the ‘I’ communicates with another ‘I’, and *from* which, as an absolute mediation, the two mutually form each other into subjects. Consciousness exists as the middle ground on which the subjects encounter each other, so that without encountering each other they cannot exist as subjects.

Fichte only deepens Kant’s transcendental unity of self-consciousness; the abstract unity of synthesis is resolved into the original action which produces the unity of the opposition of the ‘I’ and the ‘other’, by which the ‘I’ knows itself. Hegel, on the other hand, retains Kant’s empty identity of the ‘I’; but he reduces this ‘I’ to a moment, by comprehending it under the category of the universal. ‘I’ as self-consciousness is universal, because it is an abstract ‘I’, that is it has arisen from the abstraction of all contents given to a subject that knows or has mental representations.⁶ In the same way as it abstracts from the manifold of external objects, an ‘I’ which retains itself as identical must abstract from the succession of

inner states and experiences. The universality of the abstract 'I' is displayed in that, by means of this category, *all possible* subjects, thus *everyone* who says 'I' to himself, are determined as individuals. But on the other hand, the same category 'I' is also an instruction in each case to think a specific subject, which, as it says 'I' to itself, asserts itself as an inalienably individual and singular subject. Thus the identity of the 'I' does not mean only that abstract universality of self-consciousness as such, but at the same time the category of singularity. 'I' is individuality not only in the sense of a repeatable identification of a 'this-there' [*Diesda*] within specifiable co-ordinates, but in the sense of a proper name, which signifies that which is simply individuated. 'I' as category of singularity excludes the reduction to a finite number of elements, for example, to the currently known number of elementary components constituting the genetic substance.

While Fichte comprehends the concept of 'I' as the identity of 'I' and 'not-I', Hegel from the outset comprehends it as the identity of the universal and the singular. 'I' is the universal and the singular in one. Spirit is the dialectical unfolding of this unity, namely, moral totality. Hegel does not select this term arbitrarily, for 'spirit', with which we are familiar in ordinary language as in the spirit of a nation, of an epoch, or team spirit, always extends beyond the solitary self-consciousness. The 'I' as the identity of the universal and the singular can only be comprehended in terms of the unity of a spirit which embraces the identity of an 'I' with an other not identical with it. Spirit is the communication of individuals [*Einzelner*] in the medium of the universal, which is related to the speaking individuals as the grammar of a language is, and to the acting individuals as is a system of recognized norms. It does not place the moment of universality before that of singularity, but instead permits the distinctive links between these singularities. Within the medium of this universal – which Hegel therefore called a concrete universal – the single beings can identify with each other and still at the same time maintain themselves as non-identical. The original insight of Hegel consists in that the 'I' as self-consciousness can only be conceived if it is spirit, that means, if it goes over from subjectivity to the objectivity of a universal in which the subjects who know themselves as non-identical are united on the basis of reciprocity. Because 'I' in this precisely explicated sense is the identity of the universal and the singular, the individuation of a neonate, which within the womb of the mother has been an exemplar of the species as a pre-linguistic living being, and thus could be explained biologically in terms of a combination of a finite number of elements quite adequately, once born can only be conceived as a process of socialization. To be sure, here socialization cannot be conceived as the adaptation to society of an already given individuality, but as that which itself produces an individuated being.⁷

II

The *moral relationship* was clarified by the young Hegel in terms of the relationship between lovers: 'In love the separated entities [*das Getrennte*] still exist, but no longer as separated – as united [*Einiges*] and the living feels the living.'⁸ In the second Jena lectures Hegel explains love as the knowing [*Erkennen*] which recognizes itself in the other. From the union of distinct entities [*Unterschiedener*] results a knowledge which is characterized by 'double meaning':

Each is like the other in that wherein it has opposed itself to the other. By distinguishing itself from the other it thereby becomes identical [*Gleichsetzen*] with it; this is a cognitive process precisely in that . . . for the being itself the opposition is transformed into sameness, or that the one, as it looks at itself in the other, knows itself.⁹

To be sure, Hegel does not explicate the relation of recognizing oneself in the other, on which in turn the concept of the 'I' as an identity of the universal and the singular depends, directly from the relations of intersubjectivity, through which the complementary agreement of subjects confronting each other is secured. Rather, he presents love as the result of a movement, love as the reconciliation of a preceding conflict. The distinctive sense of an ego-identity based on reciprocal recognition can be understood only if it is seen that the dialogic relation of the complementary unification of opposing subjects signifies at the same time a relation of logic *and* of the praxis of life. That is shown in the dialectic of the moral relationship, which Hegel develops under the title of the *struggle for recognition*. It reconstructs the suppression and reconstitution of the dialogue situation as the moral relationship. In this movement, which alone may be called dialectical, the logical relation of a communication distorted by force itself exercises practical force. Only the result of this movement eradicates the force and establishes the non-compulsory character of the dialogic recognition of oneself in the other: love as reconciliation. What is dialectical is not unconstrained intersubjectivity itself, but the history of its suppression and reconstitution. The distortion of the dialogic relationship is subject to the causality of split-off symbols and reified logical relations – that is relations that have been taken out of the context of communication and thus are valid and operative only behind the backs of the subjects. The young Hegel speaks of a causality of destiny.

In the fragment on the *Spirit of Christianity* he demonstrates this causality by the example of the punishment which strikes the one who destroys a moral totality. The 'criminal' who revokes [*aufhebt*] the moral basis, namely, the complementary interchange of non-compulsory communi-

cation and the mutual satisfaction of interests, by putting himself as individual in the place of the totality, sets in motion the process of a destiny which strikes back at him. The struggle which is ignited between the contending parties and the hostility towards the injured and oppressed other makes the lost complementary interchange and the bygone friendliness palpable. The criminal is confronted by the power of deficient life. Thus he experiences his guilt. The guilty one must suffer under the power of the repressed and departed life, which he himself has provoked, until he has experienced the deficiency of his own life in the repression of others' lives, and, in his turning away from the lives of others, his own alienation from himself. In the causality of destiny the power of suppressed life is at work, which can only be reconciled when, out of the experience of the negativity of a sundered life, the longing for that which has been lost arises and necessitates identifying one's own denied identity in the alien existence one fights against. Then both parties recognize the hardened positions taken against each other to be the result of the separation, the abstraction from the common interconnection of their lives – and within this, in the dialogic relationship of recognizing oneself in the other, they experience the common basis of their existence.

In the Jena lectures the dialectics of the struggle for recognition is removed from the context of 'crime'; here the point of departure is the sensitive relationship between subjects who attach their whole being to each detail of a possession they have laboured to gain. The struggle for recognition they conduct as a life-and-death struggle. The abstract self-assertion of parties contemptuous of each other is resolved by the combatants risking their lives and thus overcoming resolving and revoking (sublating) the singularity they have inflated into a totality:

Our knowledge that the acknowledged total consciousness only exists by sublating itself now is known by this consciousness itself; it itself performs this reflection of itself within itself, that the single totality, in which it [the reflection] wants to preserve itself as such, absolutely sacrifices itself, sublates itself, and thereby does the opposite of what it sets out to do. The totality itself can only exist as a sublated one; it cannot preserve itself as an existing one, but only as one that is posited as sublated.¹⁰

Destiny avenges itself on the combatants, not, to be sure, as destiny did in the case of the criminal, as punishment, but still in the same manner, as destruction of the self-assertion which severs itself from the moral totality. The result is not the immediate recognition of oneself in the other, thus not reconciliation, but a position of the subjects with respect to each other on the basis of mutual recognition – namely, on the basis of the knowledge that the identity of the 'I' is possible solely by means

of the identity of the other, who in turn depends on my recognition, and who recognizes me.¹¹ This Hegel calls the absolute salvation of singularity, namely, its existence as 'I' in the identity of universality and singularity:

This being of consciousness, that exists as single totality, as one which has renounced itself, perceives itself [*schaut sich an*] precisely on that account in another consciousness. . . . In every other consciousness it is what it is immediately for itself, by being in another – a sublated totality; by this singularity has been saved absolutely.¹²

Hegel's concept of the 'I' as the identity of the universal and the singular is directed against that abstract unity of pure consciousness relating solely to itself, the abstract consciousness of original apperception, to which Kant had attached the identity of consciousness as such. The fundamental experience of the dialectic, however, which Hegel develops in the concept of the 'I', derives, as we have seen, not from the experiential domain of theoretical consciousness, but from that of the practical. The consequences of the new departure for the critique of Kant were therefore first drawn by the young Hegel in a critique of moral doctrine.

Because Hegel conceives self-consciousness in terms of the interactional structure of complementary action, namely, as the result of a struggle for recognition, he sees through the concept of autonomous will that appears to constitute the essential value of Kant's moral philosophy. He realizes that this concept is a peculiar abstraction from the moral relationships of communicating individuals. By *presupposing* autonomy – and that means the will's property of being a law unto itself – in practical philosophy in the same way as he does the unassailable and simple identity of self-consciousness in theoretical philosophy, Kant expels moral action from the very domain of morality itself. Kant assumes the limiting case of a pre-established co-ordination of the acting subjects. The prior synchronization of those engaged in action within the framework of unbroken intersubjectivity banishes the problem of morality from the domain of moral doctrine – namely, the interplay of an intersubjectivity which has been mediated by over-identification and loss of communication.¹³ Kant defines moral action according to the principle 'to act according to no other maxims than that which can have itself as universal law as its object'.¹⁴ Universality of moral law here not only means intersubjective obligation as such, but *the* abstract form of universal validity which is bound *a priori* to general agreement. Every single subject must *attribute* its maxims for action to every other subject as equally obligating maxims of action, doing so as it examines their suitability as principles of a universal legislation: 'It is not enough that . . . we attribute freedom to our will when we have not sufficient reason to attribute just this same freedom to all rational beings. Morality can only serve as a law for us as

rational beings, and thus it must be valid for all rational beings.¹⁵ The moral laws are abstractly universal in the sense that, as they are valid as universal for me, *eo ipso* they must also be considered as valid for all rational beings. Therefore, under such laws interaction is dissolved into the actions of solitary and self-sufficient subjects, each of which must act as though it were the sole existing consciousness; at the same time, each subject can still have the certainty that all its actions under moral laws will necessarily and from the outset be in harmony with the moral actions of all possible other subjects.

The intersubjectivity of the recognition of moral laws accounted for *a priori* by practical reason permits the reduction of moral action to the monologic domain. The positive relation of the will to the will of others is withdrawn from possible communication, and a transcendently necessary correspondence of isolated goal-directed activities under abstract universal laws is substituted. To this extent moral action in Kant's sense is presented, *mutatis mutandis*, as a special case of what we today call strategic action.

Strategic action is distinguished from *communicative actions* under common traditions by the characteristic that deciding between possible alternative choices can in principle be made monologically – that means, *ad hoc* without reaching agreement – and indeed must be made so, because the rules of preference and the maxims binding on each individual partner have been brought into prior harmony. The completely intersubjective validity of the rules of the game is part of the definition of the situation within which the game is played, in the same way as the *a priori* validity of the moral law is guaranteed by practical reason on the transcendental level in Kant's moral doctrine. Both cases eliminate problems of morality, which arise solely in the context of an intervening communication and the intersubjectivity that emerges among actors on the always precarious basis of mutual recognition. From the moral viewpoint we must disregard the moral relationship in Hegel's sense, and not take into consideration that the subjects are involved in a complex of interactions as their *formative process*. We must disregard what enters into the dialectical course of violent communication and what results from it; thus we must first abstract from the concrete consequences and ramifications of action guided by moral intentions; furthermore we must abstract from the specific inclinations and interests, from the 'welfare' [*Wohl*] by which the moral action is motivated and which it can serve objectively; and finally, we must abstract from the content [*Materie*] of duty, which is only determined within a specific situation.¹⁶ This threefold abstraction had been criticized by the young Hegel in the statement: 'As long as laws are the highest [instance] . . . the individual must be sacrificed to the universal, i.e. it must be killed.'¹⁷

III

Because Hegel does not link the constitution of the 'I' to the reflection of the solitary 'I' on itself, but instead understands it in terms of formative processes, namely, the communicative agreement [*Einigung*] of opposing subjects, it is not reflection as such which is decisive, but rather the medium in which the identity of the universal and the individual is formed. And Hegel speaks of the 'middle', or medium, by passing through which consciousness attains existence. After our considerations up to this point, we can expect that Hegel will introduce communicative action as the medium for the formative process of the self-conscious spirit. And in fact in his Jena lectures he uses the example of the shared existence of a primary group, namely, family interaction, to construct the 'family possession' [or welfare – *Familiengut*] as the existing middle of reciprocal modes of contact. However, besides the 'family' two further categories are to be found, which Hegel develops in the same manner as media of the self-formative process: language and labour. Spirit is an organization of equally original media: 'That first dependent existence – consciousness as middle – is the spirit's existence as language, as tool and as the (family) possession, or as the simple unity [*Einssein*]: memory, labour and family.'¹⁸ These three fundamental dialectical patterns are heterogeneous; as media of the spirit, language and labour cannot be traced back to the experiences of interaction and of mutual recognition.

Language does not already embrace the communication of subjects living together and acting; rather here it means only the employment of symbols by the solitary individual who confronts nature and gives names to things. In immediate perception [*Anschauung*] the spirit is still animalistic. Hegel speaks of the night-time production of the representational faculty of imagination, of the fluid and not yet organized realm of images. Only with the appearance of language and within language, do consciousness and the being of nature begin to separate for consciousness. The dreaming spirit, as it were, awakens when the realm of images is translated into the realm of names. The awakened spirit has memory; it is capable of making distinctions and at the same time of recognizing that which it has distinguished. Following the conceptions of Herder's prize essay,¹⁹ Hegel sees the essential achievement of the symbols to be representation: synthesis of the manifold is bound to the representational function of features that permit the identification of objects. Naming and memory are but two sides of the same thing: 'The idea of this existence of consciousness is memory, and its existence itself, language.'²⁰

As the name of things, the symbol has a double function. On the one hand, the power of representation consists in making present something that is not immediately given through something else that is immediately given, but which stands for something other than itself. The representa-

tional symbol indicates an object or a state of affairs as something else [*ein Anderes*], and designates it in the meaning that it has for us. On the other hand, we ourselves have produced the symbols. By means of them speaking consciousness becomes objective for itself and in them experiences itself as a subject. This relation, too, of the reflexive perception of the subject in language had already been characterized by Herder. In order that nature can constitute itself into the world of an 'I', language must thus achieve a twofold mediation: on the one hand, of resolving and preserving the perceived [*angeschaut*] thing in a symbol, which represents it, and on the other, a distancing of consciousness from its objects, in which the 'I', by means of symbols it has produced itself, is simultaneously with the thing and with itself. Thus language is the first category in which spirit is not conceived as something internal, but as a medium which is neither internal nor external. In this, spirit is the *logos* of a world and not a solitary self-consciousness.

Labour Hegel calls that specific mode of satisfying drives which distinguishes existing spirit from nature. Just as language breaks the dictates of immediate perception and orders the chaos of the manifold impressions into identifiable things, so labour breaks the dictates of immediate desires and, as it were, arrests the process of drive satisfaction. Like symbols in language, here the instruments, in which the labourer's experience of his objects is deposited, form the existing middle. The name is that which has permanence [*das Bleibende*] as against the ephemeral moment of the perceptions; in the same way, the tool is that which is general as against the ephemeral moments of desire and enjoyment: 'It is that wherein working has its permanence, that alone which remains of the labourer and the substances worked upon, and in which its contingency is eternalized; it is inherited in the traditions, while that which desires, as well as that which is desired, only subsist as individuals and as individuals pass away.'²¹ The symbols permit recognizing again the identical [*das Selben*]; the instruments retain the rules according to which the domination of natural processes can be repeated at will: 'In the tool the subjectivity of labour has been elevated to something universal; everyone can imitate it and work in precisely the same manner; thus it is the constant rule [*Regel*] of labour.'²²

Of course, the *dialectic of labour* does not mediate between subject and object in the same manner as the *dialectic of representation*. It begins not with the subjection of nature to self-generated symbols, but, on the contrary, with the subjection of the subject to the power of external nature. Labour demands the suspension of immediate drive satisfaction; it transmits the energies of human effort [*Leistungsenergien*] to the object worked on under the laws imposed by nature on the 'I'. In this twofold respect Hegel speaks of the subject making itself into a thing – reifying itself – in labour: 'Labour is the this-worldly [*diesseitige*] making oneself

into a thing. The splitting up of the "I" existing in its drives [namely, into the reality-testing ego and into the repressed instinctual demands – J.H.] is precisely this making oneself into an object.²³ By way of my subjection to the causality of nature, the results of my experience come into being for me in the tools, by means of which I can in turn let nature work for me. As consciousness gains the unintended fruit of its labour through technical rules, it returns back to itself from its reification, and, indeed, it returns as the cunning [or artful] consciousness which, in its instrumental action, turns its experience of natural processes against these processes themselves: 'Here the drive withdraws entirely from labour. It lets nature wear itself down, quietly watches it do so, and only with a slight effort controls the whole: cunning. The broad flank of brute force is attacked by the sharp point of cunning.'²⁴

Just like language, the tool is a category of the middle, by means of which spirit attains existence. But the two movements pursue opposing courses. The *name-giving consciousness* achieves a different position with respect to the objectivity of the spirit from the *cunning consciousness* that arises from the process of labour. Only in the limiting case of conventionalization can the speaker have a similar relation to his symbols as the worker to his tools; the symbols of ordinary language penetrate and dominate the perceiving and thinking consciousness, while the artful consciousness controls the processes of nature by means of its tools. The objectivity of language retains power over the subjective spirit, while the cunning that outwits nature extends subjective freedom over the power of objective spirit – for in the end the labour process too terminates in mediated satisfaction, the satisfaction in the commodities produced for consumption, and in the retroactively changed interpretation of the needs themselves.²⁵

Against Kant's abstract 'I', the three patterns developed in the Jena lectures, of a dialectical relation between subject and object, bring out the self-formative processes of the developed identity of the naming, the cunning, and recognizing consciousness. Corresponding to the critique of morality, there is also a critique of culture. In the methodological doctrine of the teleological capacity of judgment,²⁶ Kant treats culture as the ultimate aim of nature, in so far as we can understand it as a teleological system. Culture Kant calls the bringing forth of the fitness [*Tauglichkeit*] of a rational being for any purposes whatsoever. Subjectively, this means skill in the purpose-rational choice of suitable means; objectively, culture is the epitome of the technical control over nature. Just as morality is conceived as a purposive activity according to pure maxims, which disregards the embeddedness of the moral subjects in an emergent intersubjectivity, so Kant also conceives culture as a purposive activity according to technical rules (that is conditional imperatives) which abstracts in the same manner from the subject's involvement in the labour process. The

cultivated 'I' to which Kant attributes the fitness for instrumental action is conceived by Hegel, in contrast, as a result of social labour, and in fact, as a result which changes world-historically. Thus in the Jena elaboration of the *Philosophy of Spirit* he never misses the opportunity to point to the development which cunning consciousness, arising from the employment of tools, undergoes, as soon as labour becomes mechanized.²⁷

What is valid for the moral and the technical consciousness is valid, by analogy, for theoretical consciousness. The dialectic of representation by means of linguistic symbols is directed against Kant's concept of the synthetic achievements of a transcendental consciousness, conceived apart from all formative processes. For the abstract critique of knowledge conceives the relation of the categories and the forms of intuition to the material of experience according to the model of the artisan's activity, already introduced by Aristotle, in which the working subject forms material; the terms employed themselves show this. If, however, the synthesis is not achieved by means of the superimposition of the categorical forms, but is bound initially to the representational function of self-generated symbols, then the identity of the 'I' can just as little be supposed to be prior to the process of knowledge as to the processes of labour and interaction, from which the cunning and the recognizing consciousness first arise. The identity of the knowing subject is one that has first to be formed, to the same degree as the objectivity of the recognized objects first arises with language, within which alone the synthesis of the divergent elements, of the 'I' and of nature, is possible as a world of the 'I'.

IV

Kant proceeds from the identity of the 'I' as an original unity of transcendental consciousness. In contrast to this, Hegel's fundamental experience of the 'I' as an identity of the universal and the singular has led him to the insight that the identity of self-consciousness is not an original one, but can only be conceived as one that has developed [*geworden*]. In the Jena lectures, Hegel works out the threefold identity of the naming, the cunning and the recognizing consciousness. These identities are formed in the dialectic of representation, of labour and of the struggle for recognition, and thus contradict that abstract unity of the practical will, of the technical will and of intelligence with which both Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* and of *Pure Reason* begin. From this viewpoint we can actually see the Jena *Philosophy of Spirit* as a preparatory study for the *Phenomenology*. For the radicalization of the critique of knowledge carried out as a science of appearing [*erscheinende* = phenomenal]

consciousness consists precisely in relinquishing the viewpoint of a 'ready-made' or 'completed' subject of knowledge. Above all, the scepticism of critique, which is doubting that is not impervious to despair, and the scepticism of reflection, which is the penetration of illusion until consciousness itself is reversed, requires a radical beginning in a new sense. For we must drop even the fundamental distinction between theoretical and practical reason, between descriptively true statements and normatively correct decisions, and begin without any presupposition of standards at all – although just this beginning without theoretical presuppositions cannot be an absolute beginning, but must depart from natural consciousness. If we look back from this point to the Jena *Philosophy of Spirit*, then indeed the question of the *unity of the self-formative process* forces itself upon us, as this is initially determined by *three heterogeneous patterns of formation*. The question of the coherence of that organization of media is posed with special urgency once we recall the historical effects of Hegelian philosophy and call to mind the divergent interpretations that elevate each of the three fundamental dialectical patterns to the chief interpretative principle of the whole. *Ernst Cassirer* takes the dialectic of representation and makes it the guiding principle [*Leitfaden*] of a Hegelianized Kant interpretation, which at the same time is the foundation of a philosophy of symbolic forms. *Georg Lukács* interprets the movement of intellectual development from Kant to Hegel along the guideline presented by the dialectic of labour, which at the same time guarantees the materialistic unity of subject and object in the world-historical formative process of the human species; finally, the neo-Hegelianism of a thinker such as *Theodor Litt* leads to a conception of the stepwise self-development of spirit which follows the pattern of the struggle for recognition. The three positions have in common the method, employed by the Young Hegelians, of appropriating Hegel at the cost of surrendering the identity of spirit and nature claimed by absolute knowledge. However, for the rest, they have so little in common that they only give evidence of the divergence of the three approaches, and that means of the conception of the dialectic underlying them. How, therefore, is the unity of a formative process to be conceived, which, according to the Jena lectures, goes through the dialectic of language, of labour and of interaction?

Under the title *language* Hegel rightly introduces the employment of representational symbols as the first determination of abstract spirit. For the two subsequent determinations necessarily presuppose this. In the dimension of actual spirit, language attains existence as the system of a specific cultural tradition:

Language only exists as the language of a people [*Volkes*]. . . . It is something universal, something granted recognition in itself, something

that resounds in the same manner in the consciousness of all; within it every speaking consciousness immediately becomes another consciousness. Language, in the same way, only becomes true language, as to its contents, in a people; it becomes the enunciation of that which everyone means.²⁸

As cultural tradition, language enters into communicative action; for only the intersubjectively valid and constant meanings which are drawn from tradition permit the orientation towards reciprocity, that is complementary expectations of behaviour. Thus interaction is dependent on language communication which has established itself as part of life. However, instrumental action, as soon as it comes under the category of actual spirit, as social labour, is also embedded within a network of interactions, and therefore dependent on the communicative boundary conditions that underlie every possible cooperation. Even disregarding social labour, the solitary act of using tools is also dependent on the employment of symbols, for the immediacy of animalistic drive satisfaction cannot be moderated without the creation of distance from identifiable objects, provided by naming consciousness. Instrumental action, at least when solitary, is monologic action.

More interesting and by no means as obvious as the relation of the employment of symbols to interaction and to labour, however, is the *interrelation of labour and interaction*. On the one hand, the norms under which complementary action within the framework of a cultural tradition is first institutionalized and made to endure are independent of instrumental action. Technical rules, to be sure, are first elaborated under the conditions of language communication, but they have nothing in common with the communicative rules of interaction. Into the conditional imperatives which instrumental action follows enters in solely the causality of nature and not the causality of destiny. A reduction of interaction to labour or derivation of labour from interaction is not possible. On the other hand, Hegel does indeed establish an interconnection between the *legal norms*, in which social intercourse based on mutual recognition is first formally stabilized, and *processes of labour*.

Under the category of actual spirit, interactions based on reciprocity appear in the form of an intercourse, controlled by legal norms, between persons whose status as legal persons is defined precisely by the institutionalization of mutual recognition. However, this recognition does not refer directly to the identity of the other, but to the things which are subject to his powers of disposition. The institutional reality of the ego identity consists in the individuals' recognizing each other as proprietors in the possessions produced by their labour or acquired by trade. 'Not only my possession [*Habe*] or my property is posited here, but my person, because in my existence lies my all [*mein Ganzes*]: my honour and my

life.²⁹ Honour and life are recognized, however, solely in the inviolability of property. Possession as the substrate of legal recognition arises from the labour process. Thus instrumental action and interaction are linked in the recognized product of labour.

In the Jena lectures Hegel constructs this interconnection quite simply. In the system of social labour, the division of the labour process and the exchange of the products of labour are posited. From this arises a generalization of labour as well as of needs. For with respect to its content, the labour of each is general labour for the needs of all. Abstract labour produces goods for abstract needs. Thereby the produced goods receive their abstract value as exchange value. Of the latter, money is the concept brought to existence. The exchange of equivalents is the model for reciprocal behaviour. The institutional form of exchange is the contract; the contract therefore is the formal establishment of a prototypical action in reciprocity. The contract 'is the same thing as an exchange, but an ideal exchange. It is an exchange of declarations, not of things, but it has the same validity as the thing. For both the will of the other as such has validity.'³⁰ The institutionalization of the reciprocity actualized in exchange is accomplished by virtue of the spoken word being accorded normative force; complementary action is mediated by symbols, which fix the expectations of obligatory behaviour:

My word must have validity, not for moral reasons – so that inwardly I can remain the same for myself and may not change my moral attitudes, convictions, and so forth – no, indeed I can change this; but my will only exists in so far as it is recognized. I contradict not only myself, but the fact that my will is recognized. . . . The person, the pure being-for-oneself, thus is not respected as single and solitary, as will separating itself from the common will, but only as the common will.³¹

Thus the relation of reciprocal recognition, on which interaction is based, is brought under norms by way of the institutionalization of the reciprocity established as such in the exchange of the products of labour.

The institutionalization of ego-identity, the legally sanctioned self-consciousness, is understood as a result of *both* processes: that of *labour* and that of the *struggle for recognition*. The labour process, by means of which we free ourselves from the immediate dictates of natural forces, thus enters into the struggle for recognition in such a manner that the result of this struggle, the legally recognized self-consciousness, retains the moment of liberation through labour. Hegel links together labour and interaction under the viewpoint of emancipation from the forces of external as well as internal nature. He does not reduce interaction to labour, nor does he elevate labour to resolve it in interaction; still, he

keeps the interconnection of the two in view, in so far as the dialectics of love and conflict cannot be separated from the successes of instrumental action and from the constitution of a cunning consciousness. The result of emancipation by means of labour enters into the norms under which we act complementarily.

It is true that Hegel developed the dialectical interconnection between labour and interaction, taking his departure from a consideration presented in his *System of Morality*,³² only one more time extensively, namely, in a chapter of the *Phenomenology of Mind*: the relationship of the one-sided recognition of the master by the servant [*Knecht*] is overturned by the servant's power of disposition over nature, just as one-sidedly acquired by labour. The independent self-consciousness, in which both parties recognize that they recognize each other, is constituted by way of a reaction, which the *technical* success of an emancipation by means of labour exerts on the relationship of *political* dependency between master and servant. To be sure, the relationship of dominance and servitude also gained admittance into the philosophy of subjective spirit after, and by way of, the *Phenomenology*. In the *Enzyklopädie*³³ it designates the transition to universal self-consciousness and thus the step from 'consciousness' to 'spirit'. However, already in the *Phenomenology* the distinctive dialectic of labour and interaction has been deprived of the specific role which was still attributed to it within the system in the Jena lectures.

This can be explained by the fact that Hegel soon abandoned the systematics of these lectures and replaced it by the subdivisions of the *Enzyklopädie*, into subjective, objective and absolute spirit. While in the Jena lectures, language, labour and action in reciprocity were not only stages in the formative process of spirit, but also principles of its formation itself, in the *Enzyklopädie*, language and labour, once models of construction for dialectical movement, are now themselves constructed as subordinate real conditions [*Realverhältnisse*]. Language is mentioned in a lengthy passage (§459) in the philosophy of subjective spirit at the point of transition from the faculty of imagination to that of memory, while labour, as instrumental action as such, is deleted entirely and instead, as social labour, under the title of the system of needs, designates an important stage in the development of objective spirit (§§524ff.). However, the dialectic of moral relationships has retained its specific role for the construction of spirit as such in the *Enzyklopädie*, just as it did in the Jena lectures. Yet when we look at this more closely, we will recognize in it not the dialectic of love and conflict, but rather that dialectic which Hegel developed in his essay on *Natural Law* as the movement of absolute morality.

V

We have sought the unity of the formative process of spirit in an interconnection of the three fundamental dialectical patterns, thus in the relation between symbolic representation, labour and interaction. This distinctive interconnection, which, limited to one stage, is taken up again in the relationship between domination and servitude, does not reappear later. It is tied to a systematics which Hegel appears to have tried out only in the Jena period. To be sure, the Jena lectures incorporate a tendency that makes understandable why the specific interconnection of labour with interaction loses its significance. For in the Jena lectures Hegel proceeded from that absolute identity of the spirit with nature which prejudices the unity of the spirit's formative process in a particular manner. In these lectures Hegel constructs the transition from the Philosophy of Nature to the Philosophy of Spirit no differently from in the *Enzyklopädie*: in nature, spirit has its complete external objectivity, and it therefore finds its identity in the sublation of this externalization. Spirit thus is the absolute presupposition [*absolut Erste*] of nature:

The *manifesting* [*Offenbaren*] which . . . is the *becoming* of nature, as the manifesting of spirit, which is free [in history], is the *positing* of nature as the *spirit's* [*seiner*] world; a positing which as reflection is at the same time *presupposing* [*Voraussetzen* = prepositing] of the world as independent nature.³⁴

Under the presupposition of this thesis of identity Hegel has always interpreted the dialectics of representation and of labour idealistically: together with the name we enunciate the being of objects, and, in the same manner, that which nature is in truth is incorporated in the tool. The innermost part of nature [*das Innere*] is itself spirit, because nature only becomes comprehensible in its essence and 'comes to itself' in man's confrontation with it: the interior of nature is expressed only in the realm of its names and in the rules for working upon it. If, however, hidden subjectivity can always be found in what has been objectivized, if behind the masks of objects, nature can always be revealed as the concealed partner [*Gegenspieler*], then the basic dialectical patterns of representation and of labour can also be reduced to *one* common denominator with the dialectics of moral action. For then the relationship of the name-giving and the working subject to nature can also be brought within the configuration of reciprocal recognition. The intersubjectivity in which an 'I' can identify with another 'I' without relinquishing the non-identity between itself and the other is also established in language and in labour when the object confronting the speaking and the working subject is from the outset conceived idealistically as an opposite [*Gegenüber*] with which

interaction in the mode of that between subjects is possible: when it is an *adversary* [*Gegenspieler*] and not an *object* [*Gegenstand*]. As long as we consider each of these determinations of abstract spirit by itself, a specific difference remains. The dialectic of representation and of labour develops as a relation between a knowing or an acting subject on the one hand, and an object as the epitome of what does not belong to the subject on the other. The mediation between the two, passing through the medium of symbols or of tools, is conceived as a process of externalization of the subject – a process of externalization (objectification) and appropriation. In contrast to this, the dialectic of love and conflict is a movement on the level of intersubjectivity. The place of the model of *externalization* is therefore taken by that of *separation* [or division – *Entzweiung*] and alienation, and the result of the movement is not the *appropriation* of what has been objectified, but instead the *reconciliation*, the restoration of the friendliness which has been destroyed. The idealistic sublation of the distinction between objects as objects [*Gegenstände*] and as adversaries [*Gegenspieler*] makes possible the assimilation of these heterogeneous models: if interaction is possible with nature as a hidden subject in the role of the other, then the processes of externalization and appropriation formally match those of alienation and reconciliation. The unity of the self-formative process, which operates through the medium of language, the tool, and moral relations, then does not have to be tied first to the interconnections of labour and interaction, still central for the Jena *Philosophy of Spirit*. For the unity of this process already subsists in the dialectic of recognizing oneself in the other, in which the dialectics of language and of labour can now converge with that of morality: under the presuppositions of the philosophy of identity they are only apparently heterogeneous.

To be sure, the dialectic of recognizing oneself in the other is bound to the relationship of interaction between antagonists who are in principle equal. As soon as nature in its totality is elevated to an antagonist of the united subjects, however, this relation of parity no longer holds; there cannot be a dialogue between spirit and nature, the suppression of the dialogic situation between the two, and a struggle for recognition which results in a constituted moral relationship – absolute spirit is solitary. The unity of absolute spirit with itself and with a nature, from which it differentiates itself as its other, in the end cannot be conceived in terms of the pattern of the intersubjectivity of acting and of speaking subjects, by which Hegel initially attained the concept of the 'I' as the identity of the universal and the singular. The dialectical unity of spirit and nature, in which spirit does not recognize itself in nature as an antagonist, but only finds itself again as in a mirror image [*Gegenbild*], this unity can more readily be constructed from the experience of the self-reflection of consciousness. Therefore Hegel conceives of the movement of absolute

spirit in terms of the model of self-reflection, but in such a way that the dialectic of the moral relationship, from which the identity of the universal with the singular originates, enters into it: *absolute spirit is absolute morality*. The dialectic of the moral relationship which accomplishes itself on the criminal with the causality of destiny in the same way as on those who struggle for recognition now proves to be the same movement as that in which the absolute spirit reflects itself.

The process of destiny, which in the theological works of Hegel's youth was conceived from the viewpoint of the members of a moral totality, as a reaction evoked by the subjects themselves through the suppression of the dialogic relationship, can subsequently be reinterpreted all the more readily within the framework of self-reflection as a self-movement of the totality, because Hegel can link it to the *dialectic of the sacrifice* [*Opfer*] which is already developed in the earliest fragments:

For the power of the sacrifice consists in the perceiving [*Anschauen*] and objectivating of the involvement with the inorganic; by which perception this involvement is dissolved, the inorganic is separated out and recognized as such, and thereby is itself incorporated into the indifferent [*Indifferenz*]: the living, however, by placing what it knows to be a part of itself within the same [the inorganic] and offering it up to death in sacrifice, at the same time has recognized the rights of the inorganic and separated itself from it.³⁵

The division of the moral totality now represents no more than the destiny of the Absolute, which sacrifices itself. According to this model of absolute morality, which Hegel first developed in the essay on *Natural Law* as the accomplishment of tragedy in the moral realm, spirit is conceived as identical with nature as its other, and the dialectic of self-consciousness is united with the dialectic of moral relationships. The *Logic* merely presents the grammar of the language in which the tragedy is written, which the Absolute acts out with itself eternally:

that it eternally gives birth to itself into objectivity, and in this its character of objectivity thereby surrenders itself to suffering and death, and from its ashes ascends to glory. The divine in its shape [*Gestalt*] and objectivity has an immediately dual nature, and its life is the absolutely united being of these two natures.³⁶

But the essay on *Natural Law* and the *Logic* [*Grosse Logik*] are not linked by a continuous development. In the three parts of the *Jena Philosophy of Spirit* which we have discussed, Hegel's study of contemporary economics is reflected in such a manner that the movement of the actual spirit does not mirror the triumphal sacrificial march of the

Absolute, but develops the structures of spirit anew, as interconnections of symbolically mediated labour and interaction. The dialectic of labour does not readily fit into the movement of such a spirit conceived as absolute morality, and therefore forces a reconstruction. This Hegel relinquished again after Jena, but not without it leaving its traces. The position which abstract Right occupies within the system does not flow directly from the conception of moral spirit. Rather, elements of the Jena *Philosophy of Spirit* are retained in it. Other elements of the concept developed in Jena are not, to be sure, incorporated in the later constructions of right.

Up to the essay on *Natural Law*, Hegel had conceived the domain of formal legal relations as the result of the decay of free morality, basing himself in this on Gibbon's depiction of the Roman Empire; this free morality the young Hegel had seen as realized in the idealized constitution of the Greek *polis*. In 1802 he still asserts that, historically, private law first evolved in the form of Roman law, within a condition of the citizen's depoliticization, of 'decadence and universal degradation': the intercourse of privatized individuals, subject to legal norms, compares unfavourably with the destroyed moral relation. In the movement of absolute morality, law belongs to that phase in which the moral becomes involved with the inorganic and sacrifices itself to the 'subterranean powers'.

In contrast to this, in the Jena *Philosophy of Spirit*, the state of legality [*Rechtszustand*], which now is also characterized in terms of modern bourgeois private law, no longer appears as a product of the decay of absolute morality, but, on the contrary, as the first configuration [*Gestalt*] of constituted moral relationships. Only the intercourse of individuals acting complementarily and subject to legal norms makes an institution of ego-identity, namely, the self-consciousness which recognizes itself in another self-consciousness. Action on the basis of mutual recognition is only guaranteed by the formal relationship between legal persons. Hegel can replace the negative definition of abstract Right by a positive one because meanwhile he has come to know the economic interrelation of private law with modern bourgeois society and has seen that these legal categories also incorporate the result of *liberation through social labour*. Abstract Right places its seal on a liberation which literally has been worked for.³⁷

Finally, in the *Enzyklopädie* and the *Philosophy of Right*, abstract Right once again changes its role within the system. It retains its positive determinations, for only within the system of these universal norms can free will attain the objectivity of external existence. The self-conscious and free will – the subjective spirit on its highest level – as a legal person becomes subject to the more rigorous determinations of objective spirit. However, the interrelationship between labour and interaction to which abstract right owes its true dignity is dissolved; the Jena construction is

given up, and abstract right is integrated into the self-reflection of spirit, conceived as absolute morality. Now bourgeois morality is considered to be the sphere of disintegrated morality. In the fragmented system of needs, the categories of social labour, the division of labour and of commerce based on exchange, which make possible abstract labour for abstract needs under the condition of an abstract intercourse of isolated individual competitors, all have their place. But although abstract right determines the form of social intercourse, it is introduced from the *outside* under the title of jurisprudence. It constitutes itself independently of the categories of social labour, and only *after the fact* enters into its relationship with the processes to which, in the Jena lectures, it still owed the moment of freedom, as a result of liberation through social labour. It is solely the dialectic of morality which guarantees the 'transition' [*Übergehen*] of the as yet internal will to the objectivity of law. The dialectic of labour has been deprived of its central role within the system.

VI

Karl Löwith, to whom we owe the most penetrating analysis of the intellectual break between Hegel and the first generation of his pupils,³⁸ has also pointed to the subterranean affinity between the positions of the Young Hegelians and themes in the thought of the young Hegel. Thus without any knowledge of the Jena manuscripts, Marx had rediscovered that interconnection between labour and interaction in the dialectic of the forces of production and the relations of production which for several years had claimed Hegel's philosophical interest, stimulated by his study of economics. In a critique of the last chapter of the *Phenomenology of Mind*, Marx maintained that Hegel had taken the viewpoint of modern political economy, for he had comprehended labour as the essence of man, in which man has confirmed himself. It is in this passage of the Paris manuscripts that the famous dictum is to be found:

What is great in Hegel's *Phenomenology* and its final results is that Hegel comprehends the self-generation of man as a process, the objectification as the process of confronting objects [*Entgegenständlichung*], as externalization and as sublation of this externalization, that he thus comprehends the essence of labour and conceives objective man, the true because the actual man, as the result of his own labour.

From this point of view Marx himself attempted to reconstruct the world-historical process by which the human species forms itself in terms of the laws of the reproduction of social life. The mechanism of change of the system of social labour he finds in the contradiction between the power

over natural processes, accumulated by means of social labour, and the institutional framework of interactions, which are regulated in a 'natural' [*naturwüchsig*], that is primitive and pre-rational, way. However, a precise analysis of the first part of the *German Ideology* reveals that Marx does not actually explicate the interrelationship of interaction and labour, but instead, under the unspecific title of social praxis, reduces the one to the other, namely: communicative action to instrumental action. Just as in the Jena *Philosophy of Spirit* the use of tools mediates between the labouring subject and the natural objects, so for Marx instrumental action, the productive activity which regulates the material interchange of the human species with its natural environment, becomes the paradigm for the generation of all the categories; everything is resolved into the self-movement of production.³⁹ Because of this, Marx's brilliant insight into the dialectical relationship between the forces of production and the relations of production could very quickly be misinterpreted in a mechanistic manner.

Today, when the attempt is being undertaken to reorganize the communicative nexus of interactions, no matter how much they have hardened into quasi-natural forms, according to the model of technically progressive systems of rational goal-directed action, we have reason enough to keep these two dimensions more rigorously separated. A mass of wishful historical conceptions adheres to the idea of a progressive rationalization of labour. Although hunger still holds sway over two-thirds of the earth's population, the abolition of hunger is not a Utopia in the negative sense. But to set free the technical forces of production, including the construction of cybernetic and learning machines which can simulate the complete sphere of the functions of rational goal-directed action far beyond the capacity of natural consciousness, and thus substitute for human effort, is not identical with the development of norms which could fulfil the dialectic of moral relationships in an interaction free of domination, on the basis of a reciprocity allowed to have its full and non-coercive scope. *Liberation from hunger and misery* does not necessarily converge with *liberation from servitude and degradation*, for there is no automatic developmental relation between labour and interaction. Still, there is a connection between the two dimensions. Neither the Jena *Realphilosophie* nor the *German Ideology* have clarified it adequately, but in any case they can persuade us of its relevance: the self-formative process of spirit as well as of our species essentially depends on that relation between labour and interaction.

Notes

1. *Das System der Sittlichkeit* is quoted from Lasson's edition of *Hegels Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie, Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 7 (Leipzig: 1923), pp. 415–99; the two versions of the Jena *Philosophie des Geistes* were also edited by Lasson: *Jenenser Realphilosophie I, Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 19, pp. 195ff., and *Jenenser Realphilosophie II, Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 20, pp. 177ff.

2. G. Lukács, *Der junge Hegel* (Berlin, 1954).

3. The structure of the lectures also speaks in favour of this thesis. The categories of *language*, *tools* and *family possession* (*Familiengut*) extend into the dimension of external existence and therefore belong, according to the later cogent divisions of the system, to the configuration (*Gestalten*) of the *objective spirit*. Still, in spite of this, they do not appear in the Jena version under the corresponding title of *real* (or *actual*) *spirit*, but instead appear in the first part of the *Philosophy of Spirit*, for which the editor has chosen the designation, within the system, of *subjective spirit*. Now according to the usage of the *Enzyklopädie*, subjective spirit consists of only those determinations which characterize the relationship of the cognitive and active subject to itself. The objectivations of language (transmitted symbols), of labour (productive forces) and of action in reciprocity (social roles) do not belong to this sphere. But in terms of them Hegel demonstrates the essence of spirit as an organization of middles (or middle ground). The Jena presentation obviously does not as yet obey the later system-structure. The 'real spirit' is not set as preceding the level of subjective spirit, but represents a division which more appropriately might have borne the title 'abstract spirit': in it Hegel specifies the abstract determinations of spirit in the sense of representing a unity of intelligence and will produced in fundamental connection with symbolic representation, labour and interaction – and not in the sense of those abstractions which remain as subjective spirit when we separate from the formative process of spirit all the objectivation in which it has its external existence.

4. For another translation of this passage see *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers (London, 1951), vol. II, pp. 217f.

5. See D. Henrich, *Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht* (Frankfurt, 1967).

6. *Vorstellend*.

7. From this viewpoint, that the process of individuation can only be conceived as socialization, and the latter in turn can only be conceived as individuation, Emile Durkheim, in his first great work, *De la division du travail social* (1893), developed the basis of a sociological theory of action.

8. Hegel, *Jugendschriften*, ed. Nohl, p. 379.

9. *Realphilosophie II*, p. 201.

10. *Realphilosophie I*, p. 230.

11. In his posthumously published work *Mind, Self and Society* (1934), G. H. Mead repeats Hegel's insight – though under the naturalistic presuppositions of pragmatism – that the identity of the 'I' can only constitute itself in the acquisition by practice of social roles, namely, in the complementary character of behavioural expectations on the basis of mutual recognition.

12. *Realphilosophie I*, p. 230.

13. See K. Heinrich, *Von der Schwierigkeit Nein zu sagen* (Frankfurt: 1965).

14. Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, BA 98.

15. *ibid.*, pp. 100f.

16. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie*, §504ff.

17. Hegel, *Jugendschriften*, ed. Nohl, p. 278.

18. *Realphilosophie I*, p. 205.
19. Herder's prize essay 'Über den Ursprung der Sprache', in *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Suphan, vol. V (Berlin, 1891) – translated by Alexander Gode in *On the Origin of Language: Two Essays by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Johann Gottfried Herder*, ed. John H. Moran and Alexander Gode (New York, 1966). [Only the first part of Herder's essay has been translated by Gode – Translator.]
20. *Realphilosophie I*, p. 211; on this see K. Löwith, 'Hegel und die Sprache', in *Zur Kritik der christlichen Überlieferung*, 1966, pp. 97ff.
21. *Realphilosophie I*, p. 221.
22. Hegel, *System der Sittlichkeit*, in Lasson, *Schriften zur Politik*, p. 428.
23. *Realphilosophie II*, p. 197.
24. *ibid.*, p. 199.
25. For this relation, which by no means corresponds to the teleology of spirit realizing itself, Hegel's *Logic* offers no appropriate category.
26. *Kant's Critique of Teleological Judgment*, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford, 1928), §22 (83), p. 92.
27. 'The tool as such thus wards off from man his material destruction; but in this it still remains . . . his activity. . . . In the machine man abolishes [sublates] even this formal activity of his, and lets the machine do all the work for him. But this deception which he carries out against nature . . . is avenged on him; by what he gains from nature, and the more he subjugates her, the lower he becomes himself. By letting a variety of machines work on nature, he does not abolish the necessity of his own working, but only defers it, makes it remote from nature, and is no longer orientated as a living being towards it as living nature [*richtet sich nicht lebendig auf sie als eine lebendige*]; instead this negative living character takes flight, and the labour that remains for man itself becomes more machine-like' (*Realphilosophie I*, p. 237). Meanwhile, technical progress has gone far beyond that primitive stage represented by the mechanical loom; the stage which confronts us is characterized by the self-regulating control over systems of goal-directed rational action; and it is uncertain whether the cunning consciousness of machines which simulate the achievements of consciousness will not one day be itself outwitted [*überlistet*], even if the worker then would no longer – because control has slipped from his hands – have to pay the price for the growing power of technological control which he has had to pay up to now in the currency of alienated labour – for then labour itself would become obsolete.
28. *Realphilosophie I*, p. 235.
29. *Realphilosophie II*, p. 221.
30. *ibid.*, p. 218.
31. *ibid.*, p. 219.
32. *System der Sittlichkeit*, p. 442.
33. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie*, §433ff.
34. *ibid.*, §384.
35. *Über die wissenschaftlichen Behandlungsarten des Naturrechts*, Jubiläumsausgabe, vol. 1, p. 500.
36. *ibid.*
37. See chapters 3 and 5 of this volume. [Habermas' note – R.S.]
38. K. Löwith, *Von Hegel zu Nietzsche*, 1961; see also Löwith's introduction to the collection of texts, *Die Hegelsche Linke* (Stuttgart, 1962).
39. See my *Knowledge and Human Interest* (Boston, 1971), especially chapter 3.